

TEXTS OF AFRICAN PROVERBS AND RIDDLES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

**a compilation prepared by
Laura Gibbs
dated: March 2022**

**This compilation is also in the
public domain. Some texts are in
English only; some texts also have
the original languages.**

**THE EXCERPTED MATERIALS
BY DATE, with the page number
in this PDF:**

1854 Koelle Kanuri 3
1861 Casalis Basuto 11
1861 Schlenker Temne 16
1865 Burton Efik 22
1865 Burton Fan 115
1865 Burton Ga 122
1865 Burton Kanuri 168
1865 Burton Oji 190
1865 Burton Wolof 261
1865 Burton Yoruba 199
1868 Callaway Zulu 444
1870 Steere Swahili 451
1879 Setswana Zulu Herero 458
1883 Swahili 473
1886 Theal Xhosa 481
1887 Churchman Central 499
1890 Ellis Ewe 502
1891 Taylor Grlryama 515
1894 Ellis Yoruba 520
1896 Sibree Malagasy 547
1897 Ruskin Bamongo 554
1899 Akpabio Ibibio 589
1904 Kidd Xhosa 627
1905 Hollis Maasai 633
1905 Merrick Hausa 656
1907 Rattray Chinyanja 730
1909 Camphor Liberia 740
1909 Hollis Nandi 749
1909 Starr Congo 779
1910 Hollis Taveta 806

1910 Theal Xhosa 820
1911 Beech Suk 830
1911 Roscoe Baganda 834
1912 Kitching Banyamwenge 843
1912 Westermann Shilluk 852
1913 Junod Thonga 856
1913 Rattray Hausa 867
1913 Thomas Ibo 902
1913 Tremearne Hausa 949
1914 Ellis Vai 964
1914 Weeks Bakongo 1003
1916 AWB Nupe 1012
1916 Rattray Ashanti 1132
1919 Jackson Sudan 1317
1920 Burlin-Simango Ndau 1325
1920 Smith Ila 1330
1921 Basden Ibo 1353
1921 Hillelson Sudan 1357
1921 Ruskin Mongo 1370
1922 Baskerville Uganda 1431
1922 Cerulli Galla 1435
1922 Boas-Simango Ndau 1447
1922 Stannus Wayao 1452
1922 Stirke Barotse 1463
1924 Dundas Chagga 1470
1926 Brown Bantu 1478

1854 Koelle Kanuri.pdf

AFRICAN NATIVE LITERATURE,

OR

PROVERBS, TALES, FABLES, & HISTORICAL FRAGMENTS

IN THE KANURI OR BORNU LANGUAGE.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A TRANSLATION OF THE ABOVE

AND

A KANURI-ENGLISH VOCABULARY.

BY

REV. S. W. KOELLE,
CHURCH MISSIONARY.

J.D. Bullock
20/9/14

LONDON:
CHURCH MISSIONARY HOUSE,
SALISBURY SQUARE.

1854.

I.

PROVERBS AND SAYINGS.

LACONISMS AND FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS.

1. *Nóntsēnín kámpunyē lánēntšīa, dte gergánēm̃mí*, "if one who knows thee not, or a blind man scolds thee, do not become angry!"
2. *Ágō komándē ntšínitē, dúnōn mánēm, pándēm bágō*, "if thou seekest to obtain by force what our Lord has not given thee, thou wilt not get it."
3. *Kábū dátšīa, kárgun bágō*, lit. "the days being finished, there is no medicine," i. e. if one's time to live is completed, no medicine can ward off death!
4. *Ágō fúgubē rúmin, ngáfobē rūm bágō*, lit. "thou seest what is before, but not what is behind (thee)," i. e. thou knowest the past, but not the future.
5. *Ángaltē šímlan ganí kárgā, kálālan kárgā*, "wisdom is not in the eye, but in the head."
6. *Kámpurō ágō yím̃inya, kā múkōntsibētūrō ganágēm, dúgō širō yē; wágēya nírō "ágō šímmí" tsénīa, kā múkōntsibétiyē šédārō náptšin*, "if thou givest any thing to a blind man, lay it first upon the staff in his hand, ere thou givest it him; in the next world, when he will say "thou hast not given me any thing," the staff in his hand will bear witness."
7. *Gédi kánadibēn tsánnāwa*, "at the bottom of patience there is heaven."
8. *Kām búrgō souártīa déregē ādēm̃mārō kótšī*, "a person being prepared beforehand is better than after-reflection."
9. *Kām nēmtšē bágōtē šī mánāntšē bágō dábū kām mēogubēn*, lit. "he who has no house has no word in society," i. e. if one is so poor as not to possess a house, no one will listen to him.
10. *Mána kámuyē ndí nemētšīa, tīlō gónēm, tīlō kolóné!* lit. "if a

woman speaks two words, take one and leave the other!”,
i. e. believe only half of what a woman says.

11. *Búrgöntse búrgō kenýérībē gadi*, “he is as cunning as a weasel.”
12. *Kānte agō ngāla kām̄mō tsēdīa*, *nēmgālātē páttsegin bágō*, “if a men confers a benefit upon another, that benefit is not lost (to himself).”
13. *Kānnu kām tsēbui*, lit. “fire devours a man,” i. e. one is in great distress.
14. *Kām dāntse kēlī kwōya*, *šima nā kánnubērō gértegin*, lit. “He draws near to the fire whose meat is raw,” i. e. he who is anxious to obtain an object, gladly uses the requisite means.
15. *Kām kām tserágeni dūgō agō nántsēn tšimāgeni*, “one does not love another, if one does not accept any thing from him.”
16. *Tāmā šūgō dīniābē*, “hope is the pillar of the world.”
17. *Lemán šūgō dīniābē*, “riches are the pillar of the world.”
18. *Lemán šūgō rōbē*, “property is the prop of life.”
19. *Sóbā tširēbē mūsō ndin tei!* “hold a true friend with both Your hands!”
20. *Kárgenem kāmurō yīmā*, *nīgā ntšétsō*, “if thou givest thy heart to a woman, she will kill thee.”
21. *Kúgui timī lītšia*, *wu nīgā beántseskin*, “I will pay thee, when fowls get teeth.”
22. *Kárgētē, šima kām kánnurō tsátin*, *šima kām tsánnārō tsátin*, “it is the heart that carries one to fire or to heaven.”
23. *Kām kárgen kām tsēteite šima kárdigō*, “he is a heathen who holds another in his heart,” i. e. who bears malice. .
24. *Kām nemē ām wúrābē tsátserānīte nemē kitábubē tšétserāni*, *kām nemē kitábubē tsátserānīte*, *nemē kómāndēbē tšétserāni*, “he who does not believe what old people say, will not believe the sayings of the book; and he who does not believe the sayings of the book will not believe what our Lord says.”
25. *Áfi nemkétšindō yāyē*, *wóte kárgenēmga kāmurō yīmni!* “whatever be Your intimacy, never give thy heart to a woman!”
26. *Káliāē áfi nēmgālántse yāyē tátānem dibigō tsētenī*, “whatever be the goodness of a slave, he does not come up to a bad son.”
27. *Káliā agō kām̄mēršībē ganí*: *káliārō mersánēmā*, *šima nīgā*

- ntsětsō*, "a slave is not a thing to be trusted: if thou trustest a slave, he will kill thee."
28. *Kām yǎntse ganáwāté áširtse tsakkáta*, lit. "one who has a younger brother, his secrets are covered," i. e. he has a confidential friend.
29. *Kámte agó ngala díniā, állāyē ngalān nírō patsártšin*, "if one does good, God will interpret it to him for good."
30. *Komándē kámmō lemán tšī yāyē, táta bágō kwōyá, lemántē mánāntse bágō*, lit. "if our Lord gives riches to a man and there are no children, the riches have no word," i. e. they have no meaning, no object, no value.
31. *Kām komándē táta tšinnāma, áširtse állāyē tsáktšenamágō*, "the man to whom our Lord gives children, his secrets God covers."
32. *Ágō fúgubēté, komándē genya, ngúdō dábū kírūgūamai tsúrui bágō*, "as to what is future, even a bird with a long neck cannot see it, but God only."
33. *Diniā yermānem bágōrō, yermānemma ngálgō*, "since thou hast no benefactor in this world, thy having one in the next will be all the more pleasant."
34. *Kām yántse tsambúna bágōya, šigā wádadai tsátin*, "he whose mother is no more, him distress carries off."
35. *Kām áširtse kámurō gúltsegia, kámūte šigā tsábā šetánbērō tšéakō*, "if a man tells his secrets to his wife, she will bring him into the way of Satan."
36. *Kámuyē tsabá ngalārō kámga tsákin bágō*, "a woman never brings a man into the right way."
37. *Kām kánā kúguibē ntsětsōma bágō, sai álla*, "no one can kill (i. e. satisfy) the appetite of fowls, except God."
38. *Ágō dīniānyin kóron kírnyinnō tátā tserágenāgō bágō*, "nothing in the world loves its youngs more than a female slave and an ass."
39. *Ni tálagā kwōya, áte gálifū sōbānemmi!* "if thou art poor, do not make a rich man thy friend!"
40. *Nusótōrō lēnemā, áte pátō gálifubēn tsánnemmi!* "if thou goest to a foreign country, do not alight at a rich man's house!"

41. *Búlturō dīnīa wātsi tsábālan*, lit., "it became day, whilst the hyena was on its way," i. e. one's strength was broken before he had gained his object.
42. *Wima mei "tšīgā kamágunbē"*, lit. "I am king Elephant-bag," i. e. I am a king so strong that I could carry an elephant in a bag, or I am so powerful as to think nothing too difficult for me.
43. *Wu tawángī dūgō tsábālan wírō dīnīa wásegī*, lit. "I arose early, but the dawning day overtook me on the way," i. e. I married a wife in early youth but had no children by her.
44. *Kanuwári nōnemmi kwōya, kanuwátē nōnemibá?* lit. "if thou doest not know hatred, doest thou know indifference?" i. e. how is it that thou didst not see that I do not love thee, even though thou didst not find out that I hate thee?
45. *Wu gésā ganá ruskē, kolóngē, kura góngimba?* lit. "if I see a small tree, shall I leave it and take a large one?," i. e. if I have a chance of marrying a young man whom I may easily manage, should I pass him by and marry one who is too strong for me?
46. A certain man took a long journey on which he first passed a rich man who had many children all of whom were girls. He saluted him, saying "*ába tálaga wúse!*" i. e. "poor man, how art thou?" This man was vexed on being called poor. He next passed a poor man who had many little children all of whom were boys, and him he saluted, saying: "*ába gálifu wúse!*" i. e. "rich man, how art thou?" This man was vexed on being called rich. He next met a man who had neither wife nor children and in the evening went to sleep in a pitch-dark house, without lamp: him he saluted, saying: "*ába kám-pū wúse!*" i. e. "blind man, how art thou?" This man was vexed on being called blind. At last he met a man lying under the *kángar*-tree which has very long and sharp thorns: him he saluted, saying: „*abá kōa ngúrdegī wúse!*" i. e. "lame man, how art thou?" This man was vexed on being called lame. When the traveller returned, after a long time, he visited these men again and addressed each by the directly op-

posite title; but then they were again vexed, since, during his absence, the prophecy contained in his former addresses had become realized.

47. A certain man had a most beautiful daughter who was frequently courted. But as soon as the suiters were told that the only condition on which they could obtain her was to bale out a brook with a groundnut-shell, they always walked away in disappointment. However at last one actually tried to fulfil the condition and he obtained the beauty; for the father said: "*Kām ágō tsūrū badītsīa tšidō*," i. e. he who undertakes what he sees will do it.
48. Once in a famine a woman asked her husband to attend to the food on the fire, while she was going to fetch water. On her return she found him skimming off the foam, without being observed by him. After he had filled a calabash with foam, he hid it somewhere, supposing it to be the best part of the food. The woman did not let him know that she had seen him. But at dinner, when her husband, trusting in what he had hid, said to her "give me only a little and let our children have plenty," she said to him: "*abāntsa dte bil-gurō bígela güllemmi!*" i. e. "father, do not call spray spring!" He did not understand what this meant till he went to eat what he had put aside for himself, and then found the calabash empty.
49. The question was once asked: "*kāmūnyin kōāngānyin ndūntsa ngūbugō?*" i. e. who are more in number the women or the men? One answered: "*kōāngāma ganāgō, kāmūma ngūbugō: ágō kāmūga ngūburō tsēdenātē, kōāngā māna kāmubē pāntšintē šiga kāmūrō tamīssagei, atēmārō kāmūtē ngubū*," i. e. men are the minority, women the majority: the reason why there are more women is this that men who listen to what women say are counted as women.
50. The Phula once sent the following message to the governor of a town: "*kōa bēlāma Tsārāmi Dāduimātē tēgera tšebā dūgō āndi širō keām yātē dīnyē yēyogō!*" lit. "May Sarah's son, the Governor of Dadui make dumplings, till we come and bring

him milk and mash them that we may drink it together!" This message refers to the Pulo practise of mashing dumplings in milk and then drinking it and its meaning is: „prepare thyself for war, for we are about to attack thee!"

51. The Bornu Governor sent the following message to the Phula: "*sándi kōángā kwōya, ʔsa, ʔngō bēri dénesgana, kálū tságūte, wáa sandyáa buiyē!* lit. "if they are men, let them come; behold I have cooked meat, let them bring the sauce, that I and they may eat it!" i. e. I am prepared for the battle, we will have it as soon as Ye come!
52. *Šintse tilō dīniān, tilō lairan,* lit. "he has one foot in this world and one in the next," i. e. he has one foot in the grave, or he is in imminent danger.
53. *Ándi ʔngáfō lukránben bōnyē,* lit. "we shall sleep behind the Coran," i. e. we shall feel secure after an oath is taken.
54. *Kálāntseʔlan dāngī,* lit. "I stand on his head," i. e. I surpass him.
55. *Wūte dábūndon wu bágō,* lit. "as for me, I shall not be in Your midst," i. e. I will have nothing to do with You.
56. *Kárgeni nā tilon náptseni,* lit. "my heart did not sit down in one place," i. e. I was uneasy, disquiet.
57. *Tigīni ámtši,* lit. "my skin is cold," i. e. I am sad, grieved.
58. *Tši mánārō* or *lebálārō yākéskin,* lit. "I put my mouth into a matter or dispute," i. e. I meddle with it.
59. *Álla kámurō kálāntse tšin,* lit. "God gives a woman her head," i. e. God gives safe delivery to a woman
kāmū kálāntse tsebāndin, lit. "a woman obtains her head," i. e. a woman is safely confined.
60. *Pésgā géreskin,* lit. "I tie a face" i. e. I pull a long face, I look displeased, dissatisfied.
61. *Mánāndē ʔngálēma tsábā tilon tsúlāgeni,* lit. "our word never left one and the same road" i. e. we never fell out or disputed with one another.
62. *Sándi mánāntsa nā tilorō tsasáke* or *ganátsāga,* lit. "they put their words in one and the same place," i. e. they are of one mind, they are agreed.

1861 Casalis Basuto.pdf

DT
782
C35
1861
MAA

THE BASUTOS;

OR,

TWENTY-THREE YEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

BY THE

Eugène Arnaud
REV. E. CASALIS,

LATE MISSIONARY, DIRECTOR OF THE PARIS EVANGELICAL MISSION-HOUSE.



LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO. BERNERS STREET.

1861.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ENIGMAS AND TALES.

HAVING given an example of the war-songs, we have only now to notice, as intellectual productions, the riddle and the tale.

These two elements enter largely into the education of the children. The tale is captivating, and keeps them quiet at their mothers' side. The riddle exercises their minds, and, as it is usually proposed to several at once, it establishes a kind of rivalry among them, which is not without its effect in their general development. Imagine how a dozen little black foreheads must contract at the proposal of a puzzling question like the following:—
 “Do you know what it is which throws itself from the top of mountains without being broken?” There will be, doubtless, a good deal of whispering and scratchings of the head, before a little voice replies, “It is the water of a cataract.” The interlocutor continues:—

“There is a thing which has neither legs nor wings, and which nevertheless travels very fast, and its pro-

gress is not stopped by precipices, rivers, or walls." Some one answers, "It is the voice."

"Name the ten trees, at the tops of which there are ten flat rocks?" Answer, "The *fingers*, tipped by the *nails*."

"Do you know a perpendicular mountain situated above a ravine?" Answer, "The nose, placed above the mouth."

"What is that which is continually coming and going in the same direction?" Answer, "A door."

"Do you know a little boy, motionless and dumb, who is warmly clothed in the daytime, and left naked at night?" Answer, "The peg on which the Basutos hang their coverings during the day."

"Do you know a thing which neither walks on the ground, flies in the air, nor swims in the water, and which nevertheless walks, ascends, and descends?" Answer, "The spider in its web."

It would be easy to collect a considerable number of riddles of this kind; but they will, probably, possess no further interest to the reader than that of proving that these people are not insensible to the pleasure of *jeux d'esprit*.

They have an endless variety of tales, which are for the most part very long. They are called *chumos*, or surprises, a title admirably suited to them, whether applied to the substance or the form. If I may judge of them by those which have come under my observation, they are composed of an incoherent mixture of extraordinary adventures and descriptions of fabulous ani-

mals, of the nature of our harpies and hippogriffs; in short, the grotesque and the monstrous enter largely into their composition. Nevertheless, here and there we find valuable moral lessons, proving that evil never remains unpunished. Perhaps, in compiling a large number of these stories, we might even find more than one allusion to facts of sacred history. The style is very animated, and generally adapted to the subject; in parts of a pathetic nature, it requires a vehemence which would appear extravagant anywhere but in a country where people give expression to all they feel.

I. THE MURDER OF MACILONIANE.

Two brothers left the hut of their father, one day, to go and get rich. The eldest was called Macilo, and the youngest Maciloniane. After a few sleeps they came to a place where two roads lay before them, one leading to the east and the other to the west. The road in the direction of the rising sun was covered with traces of cattle; while upon the other nothing was seen but innumerable foot-prints of dogs. Macilo chose the latter, while his brother took the opposite direction. After a few days, Maciloniane came to a hill which had once been inhabited, and was much surprised to find there a number of pots turned upside down. It came into his head to turn them up again, to see if any treasure were hidden beneath them. He had already turned up a great many, when he came to a pot of immense size. Maciloniane pushed it violently, but

1861 Schlenker Temne.pdf

②

A Collection
of
Temne Traditions,
Fables and Proverbs,

with an English Translation;

as also some

Specimens of the Author's own Temne Compositions
and Translations;

to which is appended

A Temne-English Vocabulary.

By

The Rev. C. F. Schlenker,

Missionary of the Church Missionary Society.

②

Printed for the Church Missionary Society, Salisbury Square.
London. 1861.

Chapter V.

Proverbs.

• The following ones were met with by the author: —

1. As'áni tra wop kq, lit. „The state of having set the teeth on edge holds him,“ = „One's teeth are set on edge.“ Sense: „A burned child dreads the fire.“ Or somewhat like: „Bought wit is best.“ Or: „One learned wit.“ Or like the Germ. proverb: „Durch Schaden wird man klug.“ Thus if for instance one goes to a place, of which he was told before that some evil will befall him there; but still goes, and the evil, which he before scorned at, comes upon him, on his return he may say: as'áni tra wop-mi; and if asked to go to such a place again, he will refuse to do so by saying: I kq he ri, as'áni tra wop-mi, „I do not go there, I learned wit.“

2. Mer, pa rónkat, pa wósi; lit. „Swallow, it is bitter, it is dry.“ Sense: Take a thing patiently, however trying it may be.“ Or like the Germ. proverb: „Was ich nicht ändern kann, nehm' ich geduldig an.“

Note. The pronominal form pa, as used with the verb wósi, which is the long form of wos, „get dry, be dry,“ and which, therefore, according to analogy ought to be q; can only be accounted for on the ground that it is used with a proverb; where greater liberty is allowed with regard to the form of words, than in other common language. Another reason for which this form seems to be used, is to make it agree with the form of the preceding pronoun. The short form of wosi could not have been used here, because it is a positive proposition; but wos has the sense of „get dry“; only in negative propositions it has also the sense of „be dry“. See the Note after wos, v. n. in the Vocabulary.

For the better understanding of this proverb it may be observed, that rónkat has reference to the acerb taste, which unripe fruit has (as unripe limes), which makes it very unpleasant to swallow; and wósi refers to dry food (as dry rice), which will not go down the throat so easily, as when

moistened with palaver-sauce, as this is made lubricous by a vegetable called oca by the Liberated Africans in Sierra-Leone, which forms one of its ingredients.

3. Séne Tšémpi o tas am-baī kə-tšemp; lit. „Senge the Wise exceeded kings in wisdom.“ Sense: „Thou art wiser than I, I will not contend with thee.“

Note. Senge is a fabulous person, said to have lived in the first world, and to have been greatly renowned on account of his wisdom. (Cf. the word tšémpi, adj. in the Vocab.).

4. Ak'ór kə-fot ka tana hē aŋ-kəpatr; lit. „The empty belly (stomach) is no match for the chest.“ Sense: „A man cannot work well without eating.“

5. Télma Mōdu¹⁾ o bentr a-tšik kə-tas; lit. „A loquacious person (a babbler) hinders strangers from going on;“ i. e. „he must talk to them before they go on.“

6. Fəf-fəf o yi hē kótšine; lit. „Making fəf-fəf does not loose itself,“ or: „One making fəf-fəf does not loose himself,“ or: „does not make himself free.“ Or: „The fəf-fəf does not loose himself.“

Note 1. This proverb is taken from the catching of a bird in a trap. It often happens that a bird is caught by one of its feet only; if so, it will struggle hard to get loose; but the more it struggles, the more it will be entangled. While thus struggling it makes a noise by the flapping of its wings resembling the sound of fəf-fəf, whence this word is taken; the sense of which is that a man will not free himself from a difficulty by much struggling.

Thus if one has a palaver at the court, and then wants to talk again and again without being called upon to do so, thinking that by so doing he will extricate himself from his difficulty; one of the old men at the court, or the king, may say to him: „Fəf-fəf o yi hē kótšine.“

Note 2. As to the form of this word, it is either an adjective, when w'ūni, „a person“ is to be understood; or it might be a name for an individual of that class of persons, who behave in this way as stated above. If it is taken as

1) See the word Mōdu in the Vocabulary, as also Télma.

an abstr. noun in *q-*, we must suppose the prefix to be dropped; but it may be observed here, that the term *far-far* was otherwise only met with as an adverb in connection with the verb *yō*, „make,“ used in reference to a bird caught in a trap, which struggles to get loose. (Cf. the Note at the 8th. the proverb below.)

7. *Mā bar gbo tšimne, mā tra bar sap*; lit. „The more thou strugglest, the more thou wilt be caught.“ The sense of this is much the same with the preceding one. The more a person struggles to extricate himself from a palaver at the Bare, or Court-house, by talking much and passionately; the more he will get entangled in it, by his incautions and unguarded expressions.

8. *Trāma kađi q gbip he bom-añ*; lit. „To stand ahead does not catch a woman;“ or: „The being first does not etc.;“ or: „One being first does not catch a woman;“ or: „A being first does not catch a woman,“ that is the one who asks first for a woman to marry her, does not always get her. Sense: „He who hurries for a thing will miss it; but he who takes time, will get it.“ Or something like: „Nothing good is done in a hurry.“ Or like: „Hasten slowly fair and softly goes far in a day.“ Or like the Germ. proverb. „Eile mit Weile.“

Note. As regards the form *trāma kađi*, the greater part of what has been stated about the form *far-far* in the 6th. proverb above, applies also to this: *Trāma kađi* is either to be taken as an abstr. noun with the prefix *q-*, which, in that case, we must suppose to be dropped here; or it is to be looked upon as a verbal adjective, when *w'uni* may be understood. The latter supposition seems to be the correct one. The form *trāma kađi* might possibly be an Infinitive absolute, in which case the pronoun *q* would be the irrelative or impersonal one. See the Preface § 20.

9. *Añ-kil q bentr a-méra gbántane*; or: *Pa Kil q bentr a-méra*¹⁾ *gbántane*; ²⁾ lit. „The ground-pig prevents a mind spreading itself,“ that is „hinders an agreement, or „a harmony of mind.“

1) Or: „plan, design.“

2) Or: „making itself known,“ or: „diffusing itself.“

Sense: „He who works in secret (as the ground-pig does under the ground), prevents unity, being intent upon, by secret machinations, to sow the seed of disunity among those, who were likely to become of one mind about a thing or matter.“

10. Q tränd o-póto; o rak-rak, kére o bákar; lit. „He is like a European; he is of a delicate constitution,* yet he is strong.“ This may be spoken in reference to a person, who is of a delicate health, but nevertheless able to do a great deal; because they say that Europeans in Africa are in general of delicate health, but yet able to accomplish a great deal in war and also otherwise.

1865 Burton Efik.pdf

WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA;

OR,

A BOOK OF PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY, IDIOMS,
ENIGMAS, AND LACONISMS.

COMPILED BY

RICHARD F. BURTON



BIBLO and TANNEN
NEW YORK
1 9 6 9

VI.

PROVERBS

IN THE

EFIK OR OLD CALABAR LANGUAGE.

PROVERBS IN THE EFIK, OR OLD CALABAR LANGUAGE.

THE Efik, or language of Old Calabar, is grouped by M. Koelle (*Polyglotta Africana*) among the unclassified languages of Africa. He has, however, viewed the subject from a purely etymological stand-point. The dialect is spoken by a people who, expelled by intestine strife from the Ibibo, or Egbo Sherry (a large country, stretching from the Cross River westward to the Ibos of the Niger), established themselves on the banks of the Old Calabar River. Their principal settlement is Atakpa, or Duke Town, about 30-35 miles from the sea, in N. lat. $4^{\circ} 57'$, and E. long. $8^{\circ} 19'$, with an estimated population of 4000 souls. Okuritunko, or Creek Town, about 6-7 miles distant, is the second in size, and has contained as many as 3000 souls: it is now, however, in decadence. The total number of the Efik, or Old Calabar people, is laid down at 60,000; but no data exist for forming an exact computation.

In this, the heart of the Biafran Bight, there is a peculiar luxuriance of language, each tribe speaking its own. "For example, if we take Creek Town as a centre, and describe a circle of a hundred miles radius, we shall either include, or trench upon, the tribes of Usahadet

(Bakasey), Efut (Kameroons),* Aqua (Qua), Akayon, Uwet, Umon (Boson), Ekoi and Unene (Ibo). We have in this area at least eight different tribes, with as many distinct tongues, besides the Efik and its various dialects."

This and the extracts below given are borrowed from the laborious and scholar-like work, "A Dictionary of the Efik Language, in Two Parts. 1. Efik and English. 2. English and Efik. By the Rev. Hugh Goldie, Missionary from the United Presbyterian Church, Scotland, to Old Calabar. Glasgow: Printed by Dunn and Wright, 1862." I have not altered the reverend gentleman's orthography, and beg to return my best thanks for his kindness in explaining to me the meanings of the sayings.

1.

Afu edi Adiba.

You are (strong as) an Adiba.

N.B.—The latter is a large turtle of proverbial strength.

2.

Ubuene anyam urua ke afara.

A poor man makes market with his shoulder (i.e., *shrugs his shoulders*).

N.B.—"A toom purse maks a blate merchant."

* This unlappy mode of travestyng the good old Spanish name, "Camarones" is another sample of what light we derive from Mr. Cooley's "Inner Africa laid Open" (!), p. 122.

3.

Akan anwan i-que.

"Old woman cannot see."

N.B.—Meaning, small rain, a "Scotch mist."

4.

Onim aku ye idut (or ufok).

They keep requital for country (*or family*).

N.B.—Meaning, they remember an injury formerly passed over in their favour, and so pass over an injury done to them now; or they make return of evil. *Aku*, or *Oku*, is a debt of retribution, or a requital of good or evil.

5.

Mesin aku ye enye.

I let pass what I might have made palaver about (*that he may do so to me in return*).

N.B.—So I lay him under this obligation.

6.

Ekpuk etu abiat ekuri; akan abiat ama.

A knot in the tree spoils the axe; famine spoils friendship.

N.B.—Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus.

7.

Otuk owo nte otuk nkpo ke aquak.

He grinds a man as one rubs something on a grater.

8.

Asat owukha iyak.The Asat (*fish*) gives laws to the fishes.

9.

Onwon ata ye ekebe.You drink flood and ebb (i.e., *always*).

10.

Ata ada mi oduk ekebe ada mi owara.

The tide carries me in and out.

N.B.—Meaning, my changing inclination leads me to, and then away from, my purpose.

11.

Atai Abasi.

“The principal wife of God,” a name sometimes given to the Utere, or vulture, it being the “Bird of Jove” in Calabar. In their mythology, Ibasi Ibum, and Inyan Ibum (probably personifications of Earth and Ocean) were sons of Ibum Eno.

12.

Atanyum.

Literally, “Speak the truth,” an Aqua phrase, meaning a gentleman’s dance, connected with an Egbó (mystery or association).

13.

Ofuro ayara.

He becomes barren.

N.B.—Spoken of one formerly respectable in conduct becoming addicted to evil habits.

14.

Ison odiok ibikput enye ofuro ayara.

The soil is bad for the corn, it becomes good for nothing.

N.B.—Said of a place in which a man becomes poor.

15.

Obaha mi.

It escaped me.

N.B.—Spoken, *e.g.*, of a thing dropped out of the hand, or of a stone thrown, hitting some one accidentally.

16.

Owo emi abanade owo, owo enwen onyun abana enye ntre.

A man who talks of others behind their backs, another will talk of him in like manner.

17.

Iyak ebe inyan.

The fish has been kept over one tide.

N.B.—A proverbial phrase for It is spoiled.

18.

Kubiene enye nsia.

Do not cause his bowels to wither.

N.B.—Meaning, do not overpower him with dread. So a man will say, "My bowels fail within me" (from great fright); or, "intense dismay (mbariba) makes my body feeble."

19.

Owo oru ebit idu nte ndek mon.

That man is as frigid in his manner as cold water.

20.

Obiumo (or abiat) idemesic.

She spoils herself.

N.B.—Said of a woman bearing twins, who, in Old Calabar, are liable, like the mother, to be destroyed.

21.

Nyin ikpobon akam ino Abasi ikpon, koru Abasi okupde akam owo obonde ono Enye.

We should pray to God only, for God hears the prayers which man addresses to him.

N.B.—This I suspect to be a missionary saying.

22.

Imo isanake ikpon, owo miduhe eke etienede imo, ikon odua.

The yawner says, he does not walk alone; if there be

no one to follow him (i.e., *catch the infection*), the leaves of the trees will fall.

N.B.—This is a Nke, fable or adage, spoken by one who, knowing that his death is determined on, seeks an opportunity to kill some one, so as not to die alone.

23.

Enye adana ubum.

He secures the canoe by giving earnest-money.

N.B.—The individual gives two coppers, one for the bow, and the other for the stern, as earnest money, so that he claims the right of purchasing the boat when it is made. The Okuk is a brass or copper rod, the circulating medium of Efik, as far as such exists.

24.

Okuk emi edi eridana Ukot.

These coppers are the earnest-money of the Ukot (*the Raphia vinifera, or bamboo palm*), so that I claim to buy the Mimbo (*or Min Efik, the palm-wine*), when it is drawn.

N.B.—“Min” is any beverage but water. Min Makara, “white man’s beverage,” is rum. I have already noticed the similarity of the widely spread word Makara or Mbakara, with the American-negro slang “buckra man.”

25.

Edet fu ke inna edekhe nte mkpai.

Your teeth in your mouth are perfect, firmly compacted together, like a cluster of palm-oil nuts.

N.B.—A neat and idiomatic compliment to a lady.

26.

Eset esie ana sun nte emi mon edenide.

His heart lies quiet like limpid water.

27.

Ufok etuk edeni.

The house is rubbed quite clean.

N.B.—When smeared with *bois de vache*, which lays all the dust. This is a custom here as in Hindostan.

28.

Adia uku ete esie.

He reaps the benefit of the respect in which his father was held.

N.B.—Said of a child receiving support from respect to his dead father.

29.

Ekpri etu adiana akamba ndien okpun.

The small tree-climbing plant adheres to the large one, and thus grows big.

N.B.—Meaning, he attaches himself to the fortunes of some great man, and so prospers. So the East Indian saying, that insects in flowers ride on the heads of Rajahs.

30.

Idian adiari, isua akabade.

The cricket cries, the year changes.

31.

Edim edep, idiokke aban; ama ebiera, ndien ada aban odiok.

While the rain fell, he did not place his jar (*to catch it*); now that it is over, he takes his jar and places it.

N.B.—Meaning, he has after-wit; he is wise behind-hand.

32.

Ibut ama enyene adia ye unen, unen ama enyene esie ada odok okom.

If the goat has anything, he eats it with the fowl; if the fowl gets his portion, he goes up on the roof of the house.

N.B.—Meaning, I share with you when I have anything; but you do not do so with me.

33.

Abasi mimana owo, Utere iduaha.

If the Creator does not like a man, the (*sacred*) Utere-vulture will not descend (i.e., *in token of the acceptance of his sacrifice when he makes the Usara-feast, and throws out flesh to be eaten*).

N.B.—Meaning, if God had not favoured, or been pleased with me, I should not have met with this good fortune.

34.

Owo odua ke ukut, adaha; owo odua ke inua, idahake.

He who falls by his foot (i.e., *slips*) shall rise again; he who falls by his mouth shall not rise.

N.B.—Meaning, by imprudent speech he commits himself, gives his enemy power over him.

35.

Owo oru odubi ufok.

That man makes his house big.

N.B.—Meaning, he grows or is wealthy : the highest ambition of the “gentleman” being to build a grand abode.

36.

Abak odun ofok eyup atat.

He who comes early to climb knows the palm-nut which has the fly.

N.B.—Meaning, he who knows him of old, knows what liberty to take with him ; or, having known it himself, he is able to sympathise with others—*Miseris succurrere discit*.

37.

Oduok ntekhe, enye emen.

He left an overhanging shade, and the other entered it.

N.B.—Meaning, the one took advantage of the shade, or cover, which the bush afforded to follow the other unobserved.

38.

Enye oduokho mi.

He falls upon me.

N.B.—Meaning, he fastens a quarrel upon me : not being able to meet the great man who has angered him, he causelessly vents his wrath on me.

39.

Oduri eka enyin.

He gives titles to his mother.

N.B.—Meaning, he calls her by childish names of endearment.

40.

Ndutke ndikok ntukon udia esie.**I am unworthy to grind pepper for his food.****N.B.**—Meaning, his shoe's latchet I am unworthy to loose.

41.

Akpa ke ebebat.**He dies with the (*free*) man he has killed, in retaliation for killing a man.****N.B.**—Ebeba is retribution which does not repair the injury done, as in exacting a tooth for a tooth, &c. "*Usiene*" implies restitution.

42.

Ebet, or Ebed.**The smallest antelope in Calabar: it is said to indulge much in sleep; hence, a drowsy fellow.**

43.

Ikon eben idianake eben ke idem; inua owo ifonke abanade owo.**The leaf of the Eben (*a kind of plum-tree*) is not close to the fruit; the tongue of one man upon another is bad.**

44.

Afu omoduk ebende nte oyu.**You turn into a running sore, as a boil does.****N.B.**—Meaning, you become vile.

45.

Anam eben-idem.

He prepares something which may be buried with him
(*or used in his Ikpo*).

N.B.—The Ikpo, or funeral rites, open with a cry called Eku, and a ceremony named Eyarare Mkpa; literally, the revealing of the death. Until this is done a person, however long dead, is not legally so; but is, in popular phraseology, said to be sick. There is a particular word—Mbukpui—*for the unwashed state of women at such times.*

46.

Enye otup ebeta ono mi.

He speaks ironically to me.

N.B.—Ebete is an expression of annoyance, made by answering in an absurd way, as a man charged with a deed, when he knows the accuser to be aware of his innocence, answering, "Yes, it was I who did it!"

47.

Ebok imana ebok ofut idibi.

One monkey does not like another to get a belly-full.

N.B.—Meaning, you grudge that I should get any.

48.

Moyum ndikut isu ye edem.

I wish to see face and back.

N.B.—To hear both sides of the question.

49.

Isu ye edem ebuno eneme.

Face and back meet and talk.

N.B.—Both parties meet and confer.

50.

Owo ese edun edem nkpo, Abasi ese idem eset.

Man looks only on the outside of things; God looks into the very heart.

51.

Inyan inyan oflok edem ubum, kpa ntre ke Abasi oflok ini mkpa.

It is the sea only which knows the bottom of the ship, so God only knows the time of death.

52.

Ofop edem kiet, ada edem kiet edem udia.

He burns one part of the tree, and with the other he cooks food.

53.

Edem edi uso odunde ata kiet ye edet.

The tongue is a person of skill, dwelling in the same place with the teeth.

N.B.—Silence is gold; it is good to say nothing that can provoke or that cannot be proved.

54.

Eyen Otukutute akan eyen eden-akpa.

The young of the Otukutute (*a species of small shrimp*) surpasses the young of the Eden-akpa (*a certain large river-fish*).

N.B.—Meaning, the child of the poor man often outstrips, in the race of Fortune, the son of wealth.

55.

Akanam nkpo oru nte Ederi.**He did that thing as if it were Ederi.**

N.B.—Meaning, as if he were drunk (i.e., *imperfectly, or in a slovenly way*). Ederi, or Ereri, are two days in the Calabar week, called respectively Aqua and Ekpri (*Great and Small*) Ederi. When used without adjective, Aqua must be understood, and the day is called in the River "Calabar Sunday," kept with feasting and tippling.

56.

Ikpaha ke edet.**It has not lost a tooth.**

N.B.—Meaning, it is not a whit the worse, or not one of his things has he lost.

57.

Edim idibonke ùdi mi.**The rain shall not beat on my grave.**

N.B.—Meaning, I have a son to build a house over my grave. I am not childless.

58.

Unam obaha afia, ababak edinukha etu.**The animal escapes the trap, and stands in dread of a bent stick.**

N.B.—Our "Burnt bairns dread the fire."

59.

Edisam owo inyenke ibat.**A man sauntering (*unsettled*) has no business.**

N.B.—He does not attend to his own matters.

60.

Mbok, ikot nyin, mbufu ekubigi edup ke iton union.

I beseech you, friends, do not behead Edup on account of its long neck.

N.B.—The Edup is a species of brown antelope. The meaning is, do not condemn the man merely on account of his bad character.

61.

Kuda owo isu efe une 'nan ebigi.

Don't take a man before the palaver-house, and give a blind man the beheading of him.

N.B.—Don't set me to do a thing of which I know nothing.

62.

Efiakha mi.

"My finding!" an explanation when one comes upon anything of treasure trove, as boys cry "Tibs I!"

63.

Ata ada mi oduk, ekebe ada mi owara.

The flood takes me in, and the ebb takes me out.

N.B.—Meaning, that varying purpose, or desire, makes me unstable.

64.

Ekikere esie etie nte mon ubum, aka isu afiak edem.

His opinions are like water in the bottom of a canoe, going from side to side.

N.B.—Meaning, that, unstable as water, he shall not excel.

65.

Ekpa ete, ikaka urua, ikaha ibit Itu, edi ibit ama enem imo, imo iwaha inek.

Says the Epka (*a small, bald-headed woodpecker*), he was going to market; he was not going to the drum at Itu (*alias Old Ekrikok, a tribe and district on the east bank of the Cross River*); but the drum was so pleasant, that he turned aside and danced."*

N.B.—Meaning, I did not seek this; I have been led into it.

66.

Abiat ekpe.

Literally, He spoils Egbo; *i. e.*, he, by a certain ceremony, appeals to Egbo, or claims the interference of a member of Egbo.

N.B.—Ekpe is the first and original grade in the Egbo institution, a kind of West-African Freemasonry.

67.

Ekpeberusun ete, eyu nkpo edi ndaha iba, itie-itie imo imen ifoa ita; itie-itie ifoa emen imo ota.

The Ekpeberusun (*a kind of scarabæus*) says, "Times are not always alike; sometimes he lifts the ball of dung, and throws it to the ground; sometimes it lifts him, and throws him to the ground."

N.B.—One must meet with adversity as well as prosperity.

* It is to be observed in the Efik that it uses the third personal pronoun, instead of the first; the latter is the picturesque form in which the *ipsissima verba* of the speaker are put in the Scriptures and in the languages of Western Asia.

68.

Ek-pe-nyen-e-n-kut-e-tib-i-e-nan-i-dib-i.

Literally, "If he had a foot, it would come out through the belly of a cow."

N.B.—The proper name of a constellation.

69.

Ekpenyon Ibiirtam.

The name of a great juju, or fetish in the Ibo country, at the unexplored place called Odu, or Aro, resorted to for ordeal trial, and various abominations, by all the coast tribes between the Niger and Old Calabar. Thence, it is said, the Calabar people brought their Ekpenyon, or most common object of Efik worship, viz., a piece of the Ekóm tree, frequently surmounted by a human skull.

70.

Ekpo akpa mbufa ituaha, etua udi; usun ekpo oyum akan udi.

You lament not the dead, but lament the trouble of making a grave; the way of the ghost is longer than the grave.

N.B.—Meaning, his case is more to be deplored than yours. Ekpo, incorrectly translated Satan, demon, devil, &c., is a ghost still remaining on earth—though a ghost-land or Hades (*Obio Ekpo*), is sometimes spoken of—and doing as much injury as possible. Hence the biennial ceremony of Ndok. About the month of November they set up Nabikim, or scare-crows, of old cloth, &c., to attract and trap the ghosts of those who died since the last purification. A few days afterwards they begin, in the evening, a terrible noise, scream-

ing, firing, drumming, and battering house doors, which lasts till the morning. The Nabikim are then thrown into the river, and the town is considered purified. I have heard of a similar ceremony performed upon an effigy of Judas Iscariot in Catholic lands. Ekpo also means a cramp, which is believed to be the effect of "possession;" and Mbum 'Ekpo, supernatural beings, or devil-men, is a familiar name for whites.

71.

Ekpuk etu abiat ekuri; akan abiat ima.

The tree-knot spoils the axe; hunger spoils love.

72.

Ekú ete, esin udia ke mfiné awak, ke ida iton imo ika.

The rat says, "Put plenty of food in the trap, for he takes his neck and goes: he risks his neck."

N.B.—Meaning, there is a good deal of risk and trouble in the matter; make the reward liberal.

73.

Ikot itie ekuku-ekuku, esa onwin idem.

The forest is full of pit-falls; the Esa crooks itself, bends its body in the narrow turnings, in order to escape.

N.B.—Meaning, there is plenty of trouble there: a small man should walk warily, lest he be involved; or, there is a quarrel against me, I cannot go. The Esa is a very small, bay-coloured antelope, found in Ibibio, and of which is said "Esa abon unam" —Esa is the king of beasts.

74.

Ekuriku otarade enye ke idem.

Literally, Ekuriku (*risings in skin from cold or fear, goose-skin, hair on end, horripilation,*) rises up abundantly.

75.

Enye oduro ke edem enin.

He mounts on the back of the elephant.

N.B.—Meaning, he puts himself under the protection of a great man. The elephant has never been literally ridden in inter-tropical Africa.

76.

Ama ke enyin.

He loves to the eye.

N.B.—Meaning, he makes an outward show of friendship.

77.

Onim enyin ke usun, ete, enye eyedi mkpon.

He keeps his eye on the door.

N.B.—Meaning, he waits in expectation for one coming to-morrow.

78.

Ntakha akpan ke usun inwan ererimbut imana owo udono.

As an old torn basket on a farm road, so the world does not like a sick man.

79.

Ererimbut odaha owo akpanika nte mbre.

The world speaks truth to a man as play.

N.B.—Meaning, it is true what I say; but I do not bring it forward as an accusation.

80.

Erise ke isu.

Literally, a beholding the face; hence a finding favourable reception for a proposal or request.

81.

Afu erut.

You are uncircumcised: a taunting reproach. "Mbobi," or circumcision, is practised, though not as a religious rite, by both sexes; boys are operated upon about eight days after birth; girls on reaching puberty, and whilst secluded and fattened for marriage.

82.

Ebiet etie okuku-okuku, esa obok idem.

The ground slopes; the Esa antelope leans to one side in walking.

N.B.—Meaning, there is danger or quarrel: it is wise in an uninfluential man to stand aloof.

83.

Ini Esefe ye Akpara.

The time of Esefe and Akpara.

N.B.—These proper names are apparently used only in proverbs. The above adage corresponds with our "time of Adam and Eve."

84.

Eset mi oduk ye enye.

My life is set upon her.

N.B.—“Eset,” the liver, is here, as in Western Asia, generally the seat of the affections. In old days we had the spleen, so Dunbar, in the “Merle and Nightingale,” sings,—

“God bade eke love thy neighbour fro the spleen.”

Of late years, the heart is the intellectual viscus. The Efiks speak of “a word from the liver” (*i.e.*, sincere opinion), “a large liver,” a “double liver” (deceit), and “no liver” (or no courage), whilst in danger a man’s “liver fails him.”

85.

Uwem fu etie nte esikon (or, ukut esikon).

Your life is like a tobacco-pipe (or its shank).

N.B.—Meaning, you are easily destroyed.

86.

Manam nkpo ma Esunkomonko!

I shall do that thing, by Esunkomonko!

N.B.—This is an oath by a supernatural being that inhabits the bush between Duke Town and its dependency Henshaw Town.

87.

Etigi okup idok onwum idem; okup ndaeyu akpa etak.

The Etigi or Okro (*Hibiscus esculentus*) hears the time of harvest and bears fruit, reproducing itself; it hears the dry season and perishes.

N.B.—Meaning, you come near me only when there is anything to be had, not when work is in hand.

88.

Etikit-ekpo otup ama idan.

Etikit-ekpo (*a small bird*) shoots away, exhausts all your arrows, avoiding them easily from its small size.

N.B.—Meaning, I can easily put aside all you do or say against me.

89.

Etikuo mon.

Water drawn with the back towards the river or spring, and in certain cases used as a charm.

90.

Etikuo idim inono ewok.

A stream coming down won't let you swim up.

N.B.—You cannot swim against the stream, a proverb common to almost all nations.

91.

Etiridon oduk owo enyin akabade okput.

If the sap of Etiridon (*a certain tree or shrub*) go into the eye of any one, it becomes a cataract.

N.B.—This is a popular belief.

92.

Ekpo ete, eke ererimbut; ererimbut ete eke 'Ekpo.

Ekpo says he belongs to the world; the world says he belongs to Ekpo.

N.B.—Meaning, he tries to keep in with both parties, like Æsop's bat. Such men are reproachfully called "Etinkeni Ekpo," and these uncivilised people think it a point of honour, unlike us, to take one side and to keep to it.

93.

Nwariwa ada etuek-etuek, etc, akpa edi ofn owo.

Nwariwa (*a kind of tree*) stands with clustering fruit (*and*) says, "An orphan is a slave."

N.B.—Meaning, the state of the fatherless is pitiable.

94.

Etun-etun inyeneke abak ada; unam mkpa inyeneke uton.

Etun (*a small kingfisher*) cannot afford an allowance for dividing it; a dead animal has no ears.

N.B.—Meaning, he is deaf to what I say.

95.

Ntukon ayat ke usun iton, ererimbut ama mi ke eyen-nsek.

Pepper bites the throat; the world loved me when I was a child.

N.B.—I was a favourite in infancy; but now it is otherwise.

96.

Afu oyum ndida mi 'nam unen eyit fa?

Do you wish to make me your peace-offering, your scape-goat?

N.B.—Said to one who, after being reconciled to a friend, shows his *seal* by fastening a quarrel upon some other for touching anything belonging to his friend. Eyit is a medicine of various ingredients sprinkled over those who come together after a difficulty: the concocter, as he stirs it about, curses himself and others if they harbour any malice in their hearts. A more simple symbol of reconciliation is for one party to drink off half a glass of rum, and then hand it to the other, who finishes it.

97.

Mon odiokho ke ata mon odiokhode, eyen esere ke eyu ete odude.

Water rests in the place it should rest, finds its level.

N.B.—Everything according to its nature; and the boy is saucy while his father lives.

98.

Enye afak usun.
He redeems the road.

N.B.—Meaning, he purchases from his fellow-townsmen who have preceded him the right of going to a market.

99.

Afak idem esie.
She redeems herself.

N.B.—Spoken of a female slave who bears a child for her master.

100.

Afakha mi ke odet.
It sticks in my teeth.

N.B.—Meaning, the injury or slight comes from a quarter, in which I dare not show resentment.

101.

Efep isu ke ika oru.
He turns away his face from that word.

N.B.—This shows dissent or displeasure, and at the same time blinking the question.

102.

Ndaeyu efere owo.

The dry season makes one feel lightsome.

103.

Enye oflara kenyon nte adan.

He floats on the surface like oil.

N.B.—He is not in the secret; he does not penetrate the matter.

104.

Fium nkoi.

A crocodile with a spine like a catfish. It is said to be smaller than the other two species (*the long-mouthed and the garial or short-mouthed*), but more dangerous, and to drive the others from any creek which it enters. Into this animal, which is probably fabulous, persons who have a charm for the purpose are said to metamorphose themselves for malicious purposes.

105.

Enye ofon mi okut usen.

He was lucky for me at the opening of the day.

N.B.—Meaning, he was the first person I saw on coming out in the morning, and he brought me luck. Also a Hindu superstition.

106.

Abon (or, nkpo) oru ifonke aba.

That chief (or thing) is no longer good for anything.

N.B.—A phrase, sometimes used covertly to announce the death of a chief.

107.

Fuk idibi.

Blow your belly.

N. B.—A jocular phrase, spoken to one with an empty stomach.

108.

Ntan udi ofuk (or, ofuk) mi.

The dust of the grave touches me, or causes a fluttering sensation in the neck or back of the shoulders, when one feels wearied when digging a grave.

N. B.—Supposed to forewarn a man of his death. This spasmodic and fluttering sensation in any part of the body, or knocking the foot against anything, is a warning that something is about to happen. The first sensation does not always presage evil; sometimes a fluttering of the vein or skin is deemed a token of good; when the uduri-uden, a part of the leg on which the paddle rests, gives the sign, it shows the paddler that he must go into his canoe.

109.

Enye ofuro ekpe.

He assumes the appearance or practices of a leopard.

N. B.—Meaning that, by painting his body with stripes he disguises himself so, and lurks in the bush to attack people or animals with sharp-pointed weapons. He is also called *Mfuro-ekpe*, "sham-leopard."

110.

Iban.

A stake or stakes put up by the Effat people to mark out their fishing-grounds. They are revered as objects of superstitious rites, or their site is chosen as a spot to pay such rites.

111.

Ibe.

Leanness of body, exhibited by a child when, through renewed pregnancy, the mother is unable to yield it proper nourishment.

N.B.—This is contrary to the practice of the people.

112.

Ibok.

An object of worship, protecting from evil. It is in the shape of either a dwarf or of a human head, is adored by offerings, and kept inside the house to preserve it from harm.

113.

Ibok-ekon.

War medicine. It is of two kinds: one, probably an intoxicant, inspires courage; another, rubbed on the body, gives safety in the fight.

114.

Ibuk isinke ofop.

Even a miser does not refuse his cook part of what he roasts.

N.B.—Meaning, you will surely allow me this.

115.

Enye enyene eti ibunt.

He has a good head.

N.B.—Meaning, he is a man of understanding.

116.

Owo oru odu ke idak fu.

He is as familiar with your affairs as if he were a member of your family.

117.

Owu idaha nuenubok kiet isio idan.

A man does not use one finger to take out an arrow.

N.B.—Meaning, he is but one, he cannot do it.

118.

Kude akan idap.

Do not die!

N.B.—Spoken ironically to a lazy man.

119.

Idem omum enye.

The demon possesses him : he is a demoniac.

N.B.—Such possession is commonly believed in. The Idem is an invisible superhuman being, inhabiting woods and waters, worshipped and propitiated by prayer and offering. It is also a representative of Egbo, who runs about the town, Egbo himself appearing only on great occasions. The Idem of each class of Egbo has his own insignia. Finally, it is a proper name, and spoken as a Nke, or fable; it means that the person to whom it is applied is weak for want of food.

120.

Ika idibi.

Literally, matter of belly (i.e., *a concealed affair*). The Anglo-African translates this, "Palaver lib for him 'tombach."

121.

Obup idion.

He enquires at Idion, or mutters incantations, when going through his tricks.

N.B.—Idion is witchcraft, wizardy, the spells of the Abia-idion, or magician.

122.

Idumo akan ikpon, ikanke otu.

The attempt exceeds the ability of one, not of a multitude.

N.B.—Meaning, union is strength.

123.

Idumo enin odumo ke okom.

An elephant will reach to the roof of the house.

N.B.—Said when the greatness of any one is much talked of.

124.

Nka iferi, or nkaiferi.

The naked class.

N.B.—Meaning, young unmarried girls.

125.

Afu edi iflok.

You are wisdom itself.

N.B.—Said in ridicule to a wiseacre.

126.

Etie ikpon iflok owut fi ; etie iba afu owut iflok.

By yourself, wisdom destroys you ; with another, you destroy wisdom.

N.B.—A neatly turned adage, meaning that it is safe to take advice.

127.

Ifoa Ekpok.

The earth of the large lizard Ekpok ; sometimes used like *album græcum*.

128.

Enye enyene Ifot.

He is possessed of Ifot.

N.B.—Ifot is a something existing in the stomachs of male and female persons and animals. Those who possess it have magic powers over others, and are tried by the ordeal of the Ekpepe or Esere "chop-nut," or "Calabar poison-bean" (*Physostigma venenosum*.)

129.

Nsio ifot ke min.

I will take away the Ifot (*or fetish*) from the drink.

N.B.—A common custom, according to which the man who serves the drink or food takes a little himself in presenting it to others, and this shows that they are safe.

130.

Enye oduri kpupru ke ifukhi.

He puts all into his lap.

N.B.—Meaning, he persists in the thing or habit, be it good or bad.

131.

Owo ada nkpo oru oduri enye ke ifukhi.

Some one takes and puts it in his lap.

N.B.—Meaning, the person persists in charging him with it, or in making it a big matter.

132.

Ada ke ifure.

He obtains it easily (e.g., *from a friend, not being under the necessity of working for it*).

133.

Asana ke ifure.

He goes after his pleasure.

N.B.—Meaning, he goes to see a friend, not to “make palaver.”

134.

Mbok ofon yak nyin itie itie ke ufok emi ke ifure.

I beseech thee let us remain in this house in quietness.

N.B.—A prayer uttered by one entering into a new or strange house, as he pours out a little rum or palm wine in libation.

135.

Ika okono mfan.

The deliverance (*or sentence delivered*) hangs up the pepper.

N.B.—Meaning, the matter is settled. Mfan is the root of “Mbukpa,” which resembles Malaguetta pepper in form and taste, and is used as pepper. The small tubes are strung as beads, and hung round the neck, as a sign of submission, giving protection in war or in palaver. To “eat Mfan” is to be reduced to the greatest straits.

136.

'Ma ndaha ika mi, afu obop ke ikon otup oduok ;
ini ama anam, afu etuene ikan asana oyum.

I gave you advice ; you tied it to some grass and
tossed it away ; having done so, you lighted a torch and
went about seeking it.

N.B.—Meaning, I gave you my advice, but you rejected it ; now
you find it is of value to you.

137.

Ikon-eset.

A beat-breast.

N.B.—Meaning, an office-bearer in each Nka or order, of which
there are now seven, divided chiefly according to age. Each of them
takes its turn to watch the town ; and in case of war or public work
the inhabitants are called out according to their several classes. The
official announces the resolutions of the Nka in any matter by
knocking his breast. He also claims as his perquisites the breast of
any animal killed for a class-feast.

138.

**Ebok okup ikon eyen atu ikot, eke ata ikot, enye
ikupke.**

The moukey hears the cough of the hunter's attendant,
but does not hear the monkey's own.

N.B.—Meaning, you make a great ado when any one does so, but
you do so yourself without scruple.

139.

Akaka ikot ikut?

Did you go to the tortoise bush ? (i.e., *to wait to catch
one.*)

N.B.—Said to anyone who keeps others waiting on him.

140.

Oquahare ikpat ke ebiet oru.

He wipes his feet at that place.

N.B.—Meaning, he declares he will have nothing more to do with it.

141.

Owo oru! Ikpikpu esie! Inamke!

That man! His is no crime! He did not do it!

N.B.—Exclamations used by bystanders to clear a man when unjustly accused.

142.

Udari okpodum ntek, ika ekpetebe ikpon.

If the Udari (*fruit*) should produce the branches, then justice might come forth for the friendless.

143.

Ikukpa odaha ete, imo ique afia enyon; ima ikut, imo imakpa.

Ikukpa (*the wild guinea fowl?*) says he sees no snare above; should he see one he should die.

N.B.—Meaning, it is good to keep out of harm's way, or, as others explain it, he is beneath my notice, not worthy of being spoken to.

144.

Ikunetu ntan afia idaha owo edere inyun ikut.

The Ikunetu (*red sandy clay used for plaster and dab*) does not take a man, and the world continues to see him.

N.B.—Meaning, the grave gives not back the dead.

145.

Afu emesin ubok fu ke etak ikut.

You put your hand under the tortoise-shell.

N.B.—Meaning, you placed yourself in the power of an extortioner.

146.

Ikut ye equon, edem ukem.

The tortoise and the snail, their backs are the same.

N.B.—Meaning, you need not give yourself airs on account of any fancied superiority. Pig-iron *versus* tenpenny nails.

147.

Ikut-enyin eno idike eno: ntie ke ufok mi nyokho eno, ndien eset adat mi.

A gift given after coming under the eye is no gift: I sit in my house and unexpectedly receive a gift, then my heart is glad.

N.B.—A fair specimen of the negro's deep study of "The Pleasures of 'Daah.'"

148.

Ini anameti.

Time causes remembrance.

N.B.—Meaning, little valued when possessed, it is regretted when gone.

149.

Enyin edi ino.

The eye is a thief.

N.B.—Meaning, it wanders from one object to another.

150.

Enyene inua enyene ubok; enyene inua-inua ifonke.

If he has hand and mouth too; but to have mouth only is not good.

N.B.—Meaning, it is foolish to boast, unless the boaster can make good what he says.

151.

Enye enine fi ke inua nte inun.

He is sweet as salt in your mouth.

N.B.—Said ironically of one who is always showing himself hostile.

152.

Inyan (or mfin) emi esiere nwan ye ebe.

This water (*or this day*) is like wife and husband.

N.B.—Meaning, there are contrary currents, or unsettled weather.

153.

Iyak akpa inyan esin; ibietke ntutu inyan ibum.

The sea rejects the dead fish; it does not seem to have been in the ocean.

N.B.—Meaning, now I am useless, you cast me off.

154.

Ekikere asana isan akan ikpat; ikpat akpasana isan ekikere, okpokut mi idiok eyen.

The thought travels quicker than the foot; if the foot should travel at the thought's rate, you would call me a bad boy.

N.B.—Meaning, if action were as ready as thought, we should reveal many a now concealed folly.

155.

Idaha inuen edi isara.

The standing of a bird is just his perching.

N.B.—Meaning, I stand as you see; I have nothing to do in the matter. Or, he stands as you see, with nothing but his cloth around him.

156.

Isebe ete, inwanake enwan, itokhake utok, iyekup edem ke iko.

The crab says he does not fight nor quarrel, but he will bear his back in the calabash (i.e., *be captured*).

N.B.—Meaning, why do you come to make palaver, or assault me so? We have no quarrel.

157.

Nkpo iseri.

A thing touched by another, which the proud man (*owo iseri*) cannot use till it is wiped.

158.

Enyene ison-ika.

He has but one word.

N.B.—Said of a true man.

159.

Akpatre isuni ikanke mkpa.

There is no worse curse than to desire a man's death.

N.B.—We also say, "It is ill waiting for dead men's shoes."

160.

Owok nte iteminun.

He swims like a basket of salt (i.e., *he sinks*).

N.B.—Said in ridicule to one who cannot swim. The Iteminun is the fillet or cone of Nkanya (palm fronds, of which roof-mats are made), in which the people store salt.

161.

Ono ituen esok fi.

He sends his threat to you.

N.B.—A feather of the Ituen (a large black and white fish-hawk) and wad of gun are sent from one tribe or town to another as a threat or declaration of war, which opens if the articles are accepted. So the Ntan-ituen, or hawk's feather, can be worn on the head only by one who has killed or captured an enemy in battle.

162.

Anwambana inyeneke okudok aran, ete idia iwewe.

The cat has not a farthing's worth of oil, yet he says he will feast on Iwewe.

N.B.—Meaning, your aim is above your means. The Iwewe is a dish of coarsely-mashed yams, not adhesive like Fufu.

163.

Owo iflokke iwuk uwem esie.

One knows not the stability of his life (i.e., *how long it will continue*).

164.

Iyak okpun onyon aka idim.

The fish when grown big returns to his rivulet.

N.B.—Meaning, you must not forget your origin.

165.

Owo iyip.

A man of blood, a blood-man, one who has taken the Mbiam-iyip (*blood-oath*) and has made brotherhood with another by tasting of his blood. A common practice throughout Pagan Africa.

166.

Ofon owo ndikut ukut, nkan mkpa.

It is good for a man to bear trouble rather than die.

167.

Inyene akan enye idem.

His wealth is superior to him.

N.B.—Meaning, he is an insignificant man whose wealth is his only importance.

168.

Enye ada owo akana ke ibunt (or akana owo ke ibunt ono ewut, or osio isup).

He gives up a man as his substitute to be killed, or to liquidate his fine.

N.B.—This "substitution" system, the "Badli" of India and Sindh, is exceedingly common in Old Calabar. Another saying is, "He (the slave) dies for that for which his master should have died."

169.

Kere odaha, etc, owo ekere nte anamde utum, ke ekem ini utum.

The Kere (*a rare small bird whose note is heard in the plantations when clearing-time approaches*) says, "Men must think of doing work, as the time for work has come."

170.

Uwem esie (*or iton esie or enye okobo fi*).

His life (*or injury*) lies upon you.

N.B.—Meaning, it will be your crime if you kill him by Ifot.
See No. 128.

171.

Enye edi aqua etu emi nkpo okomode keset; enye ama odua, kpupru nkpo akpa.

He is a large tree on which all things hang, or are entwined; if he falls, all perish.

N.B.—Spoken of a great man.

172.

Mo ekpehe enye emana.

They cut off his birth (i.e., *his rising greatness*).

N.B.—Meaning, they destroyed (*kpehe*) him to prevent him becoming too great or wealthy—a fatally common practice in Calabar.

173.

Kpi nton.

Nick the bamboo (*that runs across the roof*).

N.B.—Meaning, remember it, treasure it in your memory.

174.

Abia-ibok okpoha ukpon fu, ono fi ukpon owo enwen.

The Abia-ibok (*medicine-man*) changes your soul (*life?*) and gives you that of another.

N.B.—Meaning, you being about to die, he gives you the soul (life?) of one who is likely to live long, bestowing yours in its place, so that you live and he dies.

175.

Okpori ukut eberi ke ebek.

He wipes his trouble on his cheek.

N.B.—Meaning, he exercises a patient forbearance.

176.

Ekpe iba, ubum okuba.

The two-mouthed man; his canoe will turn bottom up.

N.B.—Meaning, evil will befall him.

177.

Okuk enye nkpo.

He shut her up to fatten (i.e., *before marriage*).

178.

Nte afu okukha nkpo.

Do you seclude yourself (i.e., *as a young woman when fattening for marriage*)?

N.B.—Spoken to a man who sits much in the house.

179.

Eyen okune ofon.

Lit., The boy tries on a waistcloth (*the local toga virilis, meaning, he attains the age of puberty*).

N.B.—Usara ukune-ofon is the feast given on that occasion : the father fixes the time generally when the son has passed his fifteenth year.

180.

Ota mkpon oyum mba.

The planter of koko (*Colocasia esculenta*) wishes but a seedling.

N.B.—Meaning, having a nest-egg, or something to begin with, he will multiply.

181.

Mo eyesubo mbai mbufu nte owo osubode mbai abia.

They will destroy you as men destroy the Mbai (i.e., *yam-cuts for planting, laying waste the plantation*).

N.B.—Meaning, they will destroy you and your race, root and branch.

182.

Nda mon ison ntuak oko? Idun mbia oson mkpa.

Where shall I get a spot to plant a fence (i.e., *to build a house*)? The abode of the tale-bearer is worse than death.

183.

Oduok mo Mbiam.

He throws them Mbiam.

N.B.—Mbiam is a liquid tasted when swearing, and causing droopy to perjurers. The above means, he throws this liquid about

the place to punish those that have been guilty of a theft, the perpetrators of which are unknown. When one would "*annual Mbiam*," or release himself from the oath, he must present gifts to, and forward prayers through, the keeper of Mbiam.

184.

Itiat ofon urua, edi mbiumo.

A stone is a good market thing, but it is a burden.

N.B.—Meaning, the thing is desirable, but it is beyond my purse; or the woman is fair, but her expensiveness renders her unfit for my wife.

185.

Idiok etu nte edinukha mbokok ete, inenekode, enye obuno.

The bad tree, like the crooked sugar-cane, says he will not straighten; he breaks.

N.B.—Meaning, he is now too old to change his habits.

186.

Inyan akamana oflok edem ubum; mbubet afu ofiarade do edi ikpikpu.

The sea from its birth knew the bottom of the canoe; a piece of drift wood, you float there and are nothing.

N.B.—Meaning, I was in this matter from the first, and know all about it; and you now come and wish to oust me.

187.

Odion mbubiam, mbubiam akabade iseri.

He bestowed benefits on this lewd man, and the fellow turned out haughty.

N.B.—Meaning, he raised up a wretch, who was of course ungrateful.

188.

Amia mi mbubiam.

He beats me shamefully (i.e., *not being able to cope with him, I am beaten at his pleasure*).

189.

Mbubum-mbubum owo inamke nkpo.

A man always breaking off from his work never finishes anything.

190.

Mbuebuep adia nkpo ison.

The Mbuebuep (*or colt's-foot leaf*) eats the thing on the ground.

N.B.—Four leaves of this plant are employed to receive the sacrificial blood when making the Idion “Egbo Chop,” or incantation.

191.

Mbuka ke anam mi.

I have a presentiment of evil.

N.B.—Mbuka is a very bad omen, as of the warning of the owl.

192.

Obume mbume okup usem.

He who asks questions hears (*or learns*) the language, or gets interpretations.

193.

Mbume ke eyen-owon enyin ekpuni.

The Mbume (*mud-fish*) is a small thing, but it has big eyes.

N.B.—Meaning, you presume much for a young man.

194.

Mbup ete, imo idike eyen-owon isua iba.

Mbup says he will not be a boy for two years.

N.B.—Mbup is a small yam, partly given to the women who weed the plot, partly kept for food.

195.

Mbiaekon awak nte mfan ikot.

The people of Mbiaekon are as abundant as the leaves of the forest.

196.

Onwon min mfanifa.

He drinks palm wine like the Mfanifa (*as we say, like a fish*).

N.B.—Mfanifa are the minute flies that flock to anything sweet.

197.

Mfanko ukom imana ukom, erikpuk arata imana arata.

One plantain pulled off the bunch does not finish the plantain; biting off a little of the Arata (*plantain or koko prepared for preservation*) does not finish the Arata.

N.B.—Meaning, a little from your abundance will not ruin you.

198.

Eku edue mfine, mfine ata eku; miduehe mfine, mfine itaha.

The rat enters the trap, the trap catches it; if it did not go into the trap, the trap would not do so.

N.B.—Meaning, if I do wrong I shall suffer for it, but not otherwise.

199.

Idiok oduk idem, mfon imekheke; mfon mi ekobi ke ubet, idiok mi enyam ke urua.

My badness is more manifest than my goodness; you lock up my goodness in the room, and you sell my badness in the market.

N.B.—You conceal my virtues and expose my vices.

200.

Mfut akakan.

The shade circles.

N.B.—Meaning, the supremacy, or royalty, leaves one family and goes to another; the wheel of Fortune turns round.

201.

Etu emi okari nte 'mon.

This tree grows like water (i.e., *rapidly as the tide fills up*).

202.

'Mon emen mi afak.

The tide carries me back.

N.B.—Meaning, my inclination leads me to return.

203.

Ebeisu omono enyin idim.

The one who passed before you saw the eye of the spring.

N.B.—Meaning, older men know better things than you.

204.

Akani mukanda omum unam, obufa mukanda imumke.

The old net catches animals, the new does not.

N.B.—So we say, An old head is better than a young one.

205.

Eyu nkpo enyene ndaha mba.

The wheel of Fortune has two states; sometimes exalts one, sometimes depresses him.

N.B.—We are told that this saying is not often used; it appears to be a pure translation of a well-known Arabic couplet.

206.

Ikot etie ndak-ndak Esa obok idem.

When noise fills the bush the Esa antelope goes aside.

N.B.—Meaning, keep out of the quarrel, don't thrust yourself into it.

207.

Abasi anam ndap.

God creates dreams.

N.B.—So we say, True dreams come from Jove.

208.

Mokut nde ekpe eyetde ubok.

I see the trace of the leopard where he has washed his hands (i.e., *thrown up the sand in rage because he has caught nothing*).

209.

Ami eyen ndem Efik, esien dunpeba.

A proverbial saying equivalent to "I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews."

N.B.—Ndem-Efik is the tutelary deity of Calabar, and an annual victim to it is thrown into the river. The chief priest is Abon-Efik. Another proverbial saying is, "Ndem-Efik white-washed you," denoting escape from great peril.

210.

Monim ndita 'no fi.

I present you with dainty food.

N.B.—Said when offering a fat goat to a friend.

211.

Ndion ata owo etylene uyai; okim ata mi etylene su.

The Ndion (*an eruption like prickly heat*) follows beauty (i.e., *fixes on a man who has beauty*); why does mine follow me?

N.B.—Meaning, he is in the habit of going to the houses of the great; why does he come to mine?

212.

Ndisime aka ada iflok idun, ndien iflok ada ndisime owara anwa.

The foot takes the wise man to his dwelling, and the wise man takes the foot to the public street.

N.B.—Spoken of one who foolishly exposes himself, who makes public all he does or says.

213.

Enyene nditik-enyin.

He has a *nom de guerre*, a nickname in a good sense.

N.B.—All Calabar chiefs have some such name, which can be announced on the drum or other instrument.

214.

Enyene akamba ndon-eset.

He has great consolation (i.e., *he has the power of bestowing consolation*).

215.

Sin ndum ke 'mon nwon, Abasi anyana fi.

Put chalk in water and drink it: Abasi saves you.

N.B.—Meaning, let gratitude penetrate your heart: God has saved you.

216.

Kuyak 'mon akan ndum.

“Don't let the gunpowder (*malt*) get above the (*meal*) chalk.”

N.B.—Ndim and Nkan, chalk and gunpowder, are sometimes sent as offers of peace or war to a neighbouring tribe or chief.

217.

Afu edi ibok, edi ndut-ndut ibok.

If you were medicine you would be very bitter.

N.B.—Said of a person of waspish temper.

218.

Isip eke ne, eyup eke ne.

The kernel and the oil-nut have one mother.

N.B.—Meaning, I cannot favour one more than another. So we say, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

219.

Onim enim eyen ison.

He dives like a free man.

N.B.—Spoken in ridicule of one who cannot dive. So in Germany, He talks like a nobleman.

220.

Nkarika ikpakke equon isan.

The one (*edible*) snail does not demand of the other that he walk quick.

N.B.—Meaning, you need not censure or advise me : you are as bad yourself.

221.

Nkem-idem owo ofon ndisana.

It is good that equals consort together.

222.

Amia nkene atana ese.

He beats the Nkene, and proclaims his exploits.

N.B.—The Nkene is an iron instrument, which a man may carry and beat publicly, for silencing and boasting after he has killed a leopard or an enemy. So our saying, "He blows his own trumpet."

223.

Owo nkpan uton.

A good listener (i.e., *one fond of overhearing anything so that he may go and tell it*).

224.

Nkpekpem akan ifut iflok.

Nkpekpem (*the small bat*) surpasses the tortoise in knowledge.

N.B.—Meaning, that man knows something which you do not know.

225.

Nkpoñok, ekpere edem ibebe isu.

"If I had known" stands behind; it does not come forward.

N.B.—Said of those wise behindhand.

226.

Uka-umumke nkuku afu ete, eyen enyene.

You have not caught the locust (*or grasshopper*) which you say belongs to the child.

N.B.—So our adages: First catch your hare; Count not your chickens before they are hatched; Gut nāe fish till ye get them.

227.

Mbufu edi nkunbuk owo.

You are an "omnium-gatherum."

N.B.—A reproach addressed to slaves as collected from all the neighbouring tribes.

228.

Nkuno odum fi, afu aka amia 'mon.

The crab bit you, and you go and beat the water.

N.B.—Meaning, why do you punish me for what he did?

229.

Edinen usun inyeneke nquana.

A straight road has no turnings.

N.B.—Meaning, he is undeviatingly good, or uniformly prosperous.

230.

Enye anwana nsa.

He gives an emphatic denial (*viz., to charge on solicitation*).

N.B.—Nsa is a sign of wiping down both arms, and as it were throwing off what was on them: or the fingers are placed on the breasts, and the arms are thrown out, exclaiming at the same time Nsa, nsa, fu! "far from you!" (danger or guilt). Sometimes it is said when a child sneezes.

231.

Onim nsan.

He plants a man-trap.

N.B.—The Nsan is a kind of harrow of nails, or hard pegs, set in board, or sharp stakes concealed in the ground against trespassers.

232.

Nsasate ete, imo isuk ibon, ke edi akai okpun.

Nsasak (*a small dull-coloured bird called the king of birds*) says he keeps on speaking, although the forest is big.

N.B.—Meaning, I have a standing as well as he, although I do not equal him: or, They pay no regard to what I say.

233.

Enyene nsen ke idibi eti.

She has many eggs in her womb.

N.B.—Said of a woman who has many children.

234.

Da nsen unen se.

Take an egg and look at it.

N.B.—Meaning, you are not perfect, like the egg which has uneven ends. Said to one boasting of his beauty.

235.

Uwem owo ebiet nsen unen, obaha owo odua ke ison akpa.

The life of man is like the egg of a fowl; it drops out of one's hand, and falls to the ground and perishes. Another saying to this effect is, "The life of man is like the leaf of the Koko vegetable," *i.e.*, easily destroyed.

236.

Kpép enye nson-idem.

Teach him industry (*or hardihood, that he may be able to work for his livelihood*).

237.

Ukot otoi ntap-ntap oyaha aban.

The Mimbo (*palm-wine*) tree drops by degrees and fills the pot.

N.B.—Meaning, he or they will silently and gradually worm themselves into possession.

238.

Afu edi ntenebene mo.

You are their football.

N.B.—Meaning, you cannot hold your own, all ill-usage and imputations are heaped upon you.

239.

Ntiene Abiakpo okure esak.

The train of Abiakpo is no more, and men laugh.

N.B.—Meaning, his boon companions desert him now he is poor.

240.

Enye esin fi nton ekuat.

He puts ashes in your bag (i.e., *that by their dropping he may trace you, and thus enable him to dog your footsteps*).

241.

Owo okut eyu anwan unwon.

When a man sees sunshine he dries his tobacco.

N.B.—Meaning, "Make hay while the sun shines."

242.

Akam edi Ikiko ikan ata, nwanwa edi su (or nwa-disu) ikpa Atan.

If the fire consumes the Ikiko (*civet cat*), how much more the skin of Atan (*the bush cat*)?

N.B.—Meaning, if such a one, superior to you, has been taken, how much more you?

243.

Nyakun ibanke ekpe ayara itam.

The Nyakun (*a mollusc or a medusa*) did not buy Egbo, yet wears a hat.

N.B.—This is said of the animal's appearance: only native "gentlemen" wear hats, and they must purchase the permission.

244.

Nyek-nyek-urono ama anam Utai urono inan.

The small dragon-fly has made the Iguana deaf.

N.B.—Meaning, I do not wish to hear you. So they say, "I know very well the Utai, or Iguana, is afflicted with deafness," to ridicule an empty threat, or to refuse attention to what is said.

245.

Nyun.

A regeneration; thus, when a woman has a child shortly after the death of another, she supposes it to be the former one returned.

246.

Afu edi Obin-uqua.

You are an Obin-uqua.

Said to a man ever singing or crooning.

N.B.—The Obin-uqua is a large white bird, so called because of its song, whose note resembles the canoe chant; the people suppose its voice can turn the tide. Like the turtle dove of the East it is supposed to chant till it dies, or at least till it falls down exhausted.

247.

Obuben urua obun urua; otu obun ekon.

The basket-cover at the market breaks the market;
the shield breaks the battle.

248.

Obukpo esie ofon.

Its wiliness is good.

N.B.—Spoken of a thing useless for its proper purpose, but which may be applied to some inferior end.

249.

Ata ntukon akpa nyat, odun-obio owo akpa mbime.

The eater of pepper is like to die of pain; the sojourner is like to die of questions.

N.B.—Meaning, the inquiries made respecting town matters pester him, as he has no interest in them.

250.

Ofon esin udia.

The moon refuses food.

N.B.—Meaning, she does not shine at the time of the evening meal. She is also said to "devour the ground" when she shines brightly.

251.

Ofop fu!

Your roast (*or meal*)!

N.B.—Spoken to a guest when giving him yams to cook as he likes best.

252.

Okim asakimam.

"It pricks, he laughs."

N.B.—A prickly shrub, so called because no bad effects remain with one who laughs when extracting its thorns.

253.

**Idumo enin odumo ke okom, nkom, afu omoflok etc,
enin ikpunke nte okom.**

The elephant is said in size to reach to the roof; but you know it is not so big.

N.B.—Meaning, you exaggerate, speak hyperbolically.

254.

Kuda okonok uno mi.

Do not bring your bad fortune on me (i.e., *by putting your word or hand in any matter of mine*).

255.

Owara ana mi ke okpo isu.

He comes forth and lies at my very face (i.e., *thinking of him, he immediately appears*).

N.B.—So we say, "Talk of the devil, and he is sure to appear."

256.

Etemtem imenke ikut, ekpi okput ekemen.

He who cut the bush down did not take a tortoise;
will he who lops the branches take one?

N.B.—Spoken of an undeserving man, who looks to a reward
for an action not acknowledged in a man of merit.

257.

Okuk inyeneke ifum.

Coppers (*country coin*) have no place where they are
thrown away.

N.B.—Meaning, they are always of some value.

258.

Omon idiok otibi idet ke edem.

The Omon baboon is shaggy.

N.B.—This animal, found in the interior, is said to have a
large mane of whitish hair, and may be the gorilla, the Inaki of
Yoruba.

259.

Manima dup nyu, nkup Oti!

Manima be silent: I hear Oti!

N.B.—Meaning, you may shut your mouth now that he begins
to speak. Manima is a small musical instrument much used in
Ibibia: it is made of metal and beaten with a stick. The Oti is
also of metal, with a bit of wood inside acting as clapper to the bell.

260.

Enen nte oton.

He is straight as an Oton (i.e., *erect in carriage*).

N.B.—The Oton is a stick on which fish are skewered.

261.

Afu atua nte Owuri.

You cry like an Owuri (i.e., *much, continuously*).

N.B.—The Owuri is supposed to be a monster lizard that makes a long mournful sound at night. The natives believe its bite to be fatal.

262.

Usun eye aquana.

The road is fair but crooked.

N.B.—Meaning she is fair in face, but perverse at heart.

263.

Inyene asakha su!

How immense the riches!

N.B.—Said to ridicule one parading his wealth.

264.

Urono anam mi ndutukha, tutu asana mi ayak.

The sickness afflicts me till it leaves me (i.e., *the disease runs its course*).

265.

Enyin mi asat.

My eyes are dry.

N.B. —Said when one finds himself unable to sleep.

266.

Usari asat mi eti (or idiok).

The Usari bodes me good or evil (i.e., *when heard on the right or left hand*).

N.B.—The cry of the Usari or great king-fisher bodes good or evil, according to the position of the bird with respect to the hearer.

267.

Sek san sek san oba owo etie.

Move a little off! move a little off! deprives a man of his seat.

N.B.—Meaning, by little and little a man is wrested from his position.

268.

Sekhede nam okpun (or ekpri).

Shift a little, make it large (or *small*).

N.B.—Directing a man to move the hand in cutting anything, to make the portion cut, large or small.

269.

Owo iflokke me enye idisiereke mkpon.

A man knows not whether he will see to-morrow.

270.

Ino isioho ukut ke ino esie, owo nsu isioho ukut ke nsu esie, mo 'esasana.

The thief withdraws not his foot, desists not from his theft, the liar desists not from his lie; they go on.

N.B.—So with us, "the dog returns to his vomit."

271.

Unwon (*or esikon*) **osip idem, isipke nsun.**

The tobacco (*or pipe*) is small, the smoke is not small.

N.B.—Meaning, behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth ; or, he is a small man but large of heart.

272.

Soap eyen ubuene.

Lit., "Poor man's soap."

N.B.—It is the produce of a tree, used as a substitute for soap.

273.

Ndita iban abon esosobo.

The daughters of a great man go off quickly in market, and are easily vendible (*i.e., are soon married*).

274.

O Abasi, mekpe fi ubok, nam mi nkeme nte nsonode nsana ; ikpat mi isonke, etie nte eyen nsek emi etenden.

O Abasi (*God*), I beseech thee make me strong to walk ; my foot is feeble as a young child staggering.

N.B.—A prayer sometimes made to the Creator in sickness or difficulty.

275.

Kpuno owo eke osonode fi, koru osono owo oson iflok.

Reverence your elder, for the man excelling in age excels in wisdom.

276.

Iyip esie eyesop fi.

His blood will lie on you to your hurt (i.e., *will be avenged quickly*).

N.B.—Spoken to a man who has murdered his friend.

277.

Asuan (or awari) ika ono mi nte owo asuan ntan.

He showers his words on me as a man scatters sand.

N.B.—Said when one is abused so that he cannot get in a word.

278.

Eyen osudi ete esie ke idiok idu.

The son disgraces his father by bad conduct.

279.

Osudi idem-esie.

He disgraces himself (i.e., *by living below his means and rank, by squandering his wealth, or by allowing an inferior in wealth to assume a position and authority superior to his*).

280.

Edim esuene mbufa.

The rain spoils your gentility.

N.B.—Said to such as carry an umbrella, and are without one when overtaken by rain.

281.

Enye adia osuna.

He eats and is at ease (i.e., *he takes only what belongs to him, or he does only what is good for him, and therefore it is well with him*).

N.B.—Spoken, *e.g.*, of an old chief, mild in his rule.

282.

Idiaha isuna ke obio emi, anam oyum usun mkpa.

He does not keep himself quiet (*or well behaved*) in the town; he does that which tends to his own destruction.

N.B.—Said, *e.g.*, of an habitual thief.

283.

Abasi ota fi nte mfiue ota eku.

God strikes you down as the trap strikes down the rat.

284.

Ediwak owo etaba uwem mo ke nsu.

Many destroy themselves by falsehood.

285.

Midionkpo mo eyetak ye mo.

Their evil deeds will remain with them (i.e., *the consequences will remain with themselves; or they will not be able to accomplish their wickedness*).

286.

Tara mi idem.

Inspirit me.

N.B.—A slang phrase used by toppers when asking for a glass of rum.

287.

Tatabunko (or obu) enyene 'mon, afiak asana mben.

The Tatabunko (*a small fish*) or the Obu (*a shrimp*) has the whole river to swim in, but it keeps by the side.

N.B.—Meaning, he who may well do so, does not give himself those airs or assume so much as you do who are nobody.

288.

Ibio 'mon ke aban eten owo.

A cask half filled with water makes one (i.e., *who carries it*) unsteady in his gait.

289.

Afiak ibok ke ubok ayat, nditakha ke enyin editie didie? Enyin iditibeke fi?

You roll the medicine in the hand and it pains you; how will it do when dropped into the eye? will not the eye fall out?

N.B.—Meaning, why do you seek intimacy with one so disagreeable as an acquaintance?

290.

Utok Abasi etiene idionkpo owo.

The controversy (*or displeasure*) of God follows the sin of man.

291.

Murua etik ekpe enyin.

Murua ascribes such names to Ekpe (i.e., *as he shakes a noisy instrument called Ekput*).

N.B.—Murua is an officer attached to the three highest Egbo grades, who mourns and howls at the funeral of any one dying free of those grades. Ekpe is explained in No. 66.

292.

Enye otot idaha oru.

He assumes office (i.e., *by sending round the usual gifts*).

293.

Odumo ndituak ukut ki nkpo eke afu edidade unan ke idem-fu.

You try to knock your foot against that which will wound you.

N.B.—Meaning, you knock your head against a post, you kick against the pricks.

294.

Ntumo ubok fu.

I invoke your hand (i.e., *I claim your protection*).

295.

Otumo ete esie.

He calls upon his father.

N.B.—This, as in India, is the custom : when anything startles a man, he calls his father's name.

296.

Otap ibunt ke edem.

He throws back his head.

N.B.—Thus making a sign that he understands.

297.

Ubio nkpo eno enye.

They plant "Obeah" for him.

N.B.—"Ubio" means any medicine or charm put in the ground to cause sickness or death. It is manifestly the origin of the West Indian "Obeah." We shall be less surprised to hear that the word has travelled so far, when told by Clarkson, in his "History of the Slave Trade," that when the traffic was a legitimate branch of commerce, as many slaves were annually exported from Bonny and the Old Calabar River, as from all the rest of the West African coast.

298.

Adia nkpo ye ikut oflok ubok nasia ikut.

He who eats with the tortoise knows his right hand.

N.B.—Meaning, one who has "eaten a peck of dirt" with a man, knows what he does.

299.

Ukut ebud edikhi ke ata nte ubok ebud edikhide.

The hind foot of the goat is planted on the same spot on which it planted the fore foot.

300.

Uduak nkpo oru oyukha mi.

The purposing of that thing tires me (i.e., *he is ever talking of doing it, but never does it*).

301.

Uduono-owo.

A prodigal. Also a name formerly given to ship-captains who took any kind of slave, sick or well, feeble or strong.

302.

Kukpa ndibon idem-fu ufen.

Do not beat yourself (i.e., *do not kick against the pricks*).

303.

Kukpe ikpe ufik.

Do not judge tyrannously (i.e., *giving the right one the wrong through respect of persons*).

304.

Ufon inyeneke mbuk nte idua.

It is not worth talking about a slip of the foot as if it were a fall.

305.

Ufon.

A mark of approval or acquittal. "King Calabar" marks the arm of the recipient with chalk or with "Utu"—"Egbo powder," a yellow wood reduced to dust.

306.

Asak ukaha adiaha Okori.

She laughs sillily, like the eldest daughter of Okori (i.e., *she laughs hysterically*).

307.

Ekpok ikarake ukim odok, ino inyeneke nkpo oyip.

The lizard cannot clasp round the cotton-tree (*Bombax*) to climb; the thief has nothing, and steals.

308.

Odun-adian ukim oduokho mbara ukim.

That which is close to the cotton-tree receives the dew from the cotton-tree.

N.B.—Meaning, he is benefited by his connection with a great man. So we speak of living with the rose.

309.

Afu ke ekeme ye ukpaha-ekpo.

You are as bad as an Ukpaha-ekpo (i.e., *an evil being constantly besetting one, like the Hindu Rakshasa*).

310.

Ukpek ete. nte imo nte imo, ata idumke usam.

The Ukpek (*a fish with narrow back and body expanding downwards towards the belly*) says, if all were like him the smith would not make a fish-spear.

N.B.—Meaning, if all do as I do, there is no danger.

311.

Enye enyene okposon ukpon.

He has a strong "soul" (i.e., *he bears up well under adversity*).

N.B.—The "Ukpon" is the shadow or umbra of a person or thing that moves; not being stationary as "Mfut," the shadow of

a tree. Missionaries naturally translate it "soul" or "spirit." It is supposed to issue from the body and to visit certain places, especially in dreams; an individual may be deprived of it, as the West Indian negroes suppose a man's shadow may be caught, in which case he soon dies. Moreover, the "Ukpon" of a healthy man may be transferred into a sick body, the latter recovering to the detriment of the former.

312.

Ukpon anam enye urono.

His shadow makes him sick.

N.B.—Said when a man is seized with temporary mania, and fancies himself his "Ukpon." In this sense the word, like the Etus of the South Sea Islanders, signifies an animal—as a leopard, a fish, or a crocodile, with whose existence the life of the individual is bound up. If the "Ukpon" sickens or dies, so does the man whose shadow it is, and *vice versa*. Finally, many people have the power of metamorphosing themselves into their "Ukpon."

313.

Ukpri esu eye eti-eti.

His diminutiveness is beautiful (i.e., *is no deformity*).

314.

Ukure ufok edi emi.

This is the finishing of the house (i.e., *I shall make it no bigger*).

315.

Ukut akabade obop ubok.

The foot turns and ties the hand (i.e., *the inferior gets above the superior*).

316.

Matuak eti ukut mfin.

I knocked my lucky foot to-day (i.e., *I came at good speed*).

317.

Ina uma utum fu edi ini efen.

The completion of your work will be some other time (i.e., *you neglect the proper opportunity*).

318.

Enyene ib uut unam.

He is an incorrigible fool.

N.B.—“Unam” answers to our “beast,” more nearly to the French “bête,” including all land animals excepting birds. So Cicero confessed himself to have acted like an “*asinum germanum*,” —a genuine donkey.

319.

Ekpo ete, Una-eduro.

The ghost says, They are of the living (i.e., *he has no companionship with them*).

320.

Adia nkpo ke unom.

He eats more than suffices him (i.e., *he has made away with things got in trust*).

321.

Owo oru enyene unwa ke iton.

That man has a bend in his neck.

N.B.—Meaning, the wrinkling and overlying of the skin covering the cerebellum, as seen in persons of full habit.

322.

Ibuk ye unyim eduk nkpo kiet, ndien edi ibuk ofon akan unyim, koru ibuk obukhare nkpo ono, unyim inono.

The "Ibuk" (*a miser*) and the "Unyim" (*a selfish niggard, emphatically a miser*) are alike; but the miser is better than the niggard, for the miser brings out a thing he may have put in store and gives, the niggard never gives.

323.

Makara okpok ufok oyum unyon.

The white man strips off his house.

N.B.—Meaning, he removes the mat roof made over the deck of a ship lying in the river, and is about to take his departure.

324.

Abiabun kpa suk ke otu uquak.

A needle is as valuable as a heap of iron bars (i.e., *he is worth many of you*).

N.B.—The Uquak, or iron-bar, was here, as in Bonny and other places, the standard of value; it is now supplanted by the copper, of which four makes the old bar.

325.

Inua fu ekeme ye uquok.

Your mouth is like the Uquok (i.e., *you are too saucy*).

N.B.—The Uquok is a tree with a rough leaf, which is rubbed as a punishment on the lips of evil speakers.

326.

**Abasi odon owo urua; afu ama anyam urua fu ama,
afu emen akpan fu onyon.**

Abasi (*God*) sends man to market; when you have made your market, you must lift your basket and off.

N.B.—Meaning, when God's purpose with you is served, you must die. In England, all the world's a stage; in Old Calabar, a market.

327.

Afu odiok nte uruikot.

You are drunk as a snake (*the emblem of all that is vile*).

N.B.—They also say, "He would drink the produce of an Ewoi" (*the largest kind of toddy-palm*), and call the drunkard "Eyen min" (*son of palm-wine*).

328.

Uruk uwem esie okibe.

The thread of his life breaks (i.e., *he dies*).

329.

Usan antika: usan akanem, etc.

The Usan is a shallow dish, kept on the Isu Abasi (round altar-like mound in the middle of a yard with bones, etc., before which prayer is offered to Abasi), or on the Isu-Ekpo (the family altar, upon which various "medicines" are placed, and where prayer is made to the deceased paterfamilias). When worshipping, the devotee pours a little water into them. Usan Abasi (also called Eset—*assiette*?) was formerly kept by the head man in the middle of the town, and if any stranger

broke it he forthwith belonged to the place. Also Abon Efik (King of Old Calabar) placed them there after the feast-inauguration.

330.

Usan emana.

Plate of birth (i.e., *the spot where every individual is in the other world before his birth into this*).

N.B.—A Platonic idea, whose type in El Islam is the Yaum el Alast, when the to be embodied spirits were created and marshalled.

331.

Usan akana.

Plate of vow.

N.B.—Meaning, the spot where an individual in ghost-land makes a vow to Abasi, that if permitted to be born again amongst men, he will not live beyond a certain time. Hence of a man dying suddenly and causelessly, they say, "Akpa Akana Abasi," he dies in consequence of his vow to Abasi. And Akana, a promise or vow, comes to signify fate or destiny. This idea rests upon the African idea of death. They own, but generally with unwillingness, especially in the case of chiefs, to the Mkpa Abasi, or "the Death of God;" i.e., the death of an old man in the course of nature: our "natural death." But Ndsisi (or Iyara) Mkpa, the death of youth (or manhood), is held sudden and unnatural, requiring to be explained by witchcraft, violence, or some such theory as the above.

332.

Usara Abasi.

The feast of God (i.e., *the yam feast*).

N.B.—Before eating the new yams, which when unripe are unwholesome, the head of the house and his family sacrifice and feast upon a victim slain in a small enclosure in the yard. Two or three weeks after this an Idem or Mumbo-Jumbo parades the town, and after the Egbo ceremony, all are allowed to enjoy their harvest. The first feast is called "Usara usuk-abia." And the yam-harvest is called the "Time of Plenty."

333.

Uso akanan nkpo oru esin usia omum fi.

Your father did so, and hence ill-fortune befalls you.

N.B.—“Uso,” ill-luck generally, is here used of evil destiny inherited.

334.

Oba usiene mi.

He takes my return (i.e., *for something of his which I had lost or injured*).

335.

Ntantafion oyaha enyon; uyu nwan usua ayat ebe.

The stars (lit., *moon dust*) fill the sky; the voice of a woman given to hatred vexes her husband.

336.

Utai ete, Yak ebine imo ke akpa itok; ema ebine imo ke akpa itok, ndien emum imo.

The Iguana says, Let him be pursued in the first start; if he be pursued in the first start, he will be caught.

N.B.—Meaning, check the beginning of transgression.

337.

Utebeikpe.

A sum of money given by the successful party in a suit, to entertain “judge and jury.” The practice is said to be extinct in Old Calabar, but to exist in Ibibio.

333.

Utimudi.

Ramming down the grave of a great man. A few weeks after interment a portion of the soil is taken up and supplied by the earth of ants' nests, which, when pounded, becomes exceedingly hard.

339.

Utin ekpok.

Literally. Lizard's sun (i.e., *early morning, before there is great heat*).

340.

Uton ekpedi enyin mbobop.

If the ear were an eye I would close it (i.e., *I do not wish to hear*).

341.

Utu ke mbre edidok, ntie ke itie idem-mi.

I will remain alone rather than have a slanderer for my companion.

342.

Eyen unen ete, uye idem eka imo akan eba.

The chicken says, the warmth of his mother's body is better than milk.

N.B.—Meaning, the mite of the good man is better than the wealth of the wicked.

343.

Ikupke uye idem eka.

It does not feel the warmth of a mother's breast.

N.B.—Said of a motherless child when it dies.

344.

Uye owara enye ke idem; okutuk owo oru.

A bad influence comes from that man's body; you must not touch him.

N.B.—“Uye,” properly “steam,” here means the heat or an exhalation communicated from one body to another.

345.

Uyerisu.

A small “devil-house” (Nqueme), erected after a man's funeral, and containing all his finest articles, mostly broken, with a bed, a table, and a quantity of food for the use of the dead. The “Uyerisu” is also a table whereon articles of domestic use are put, and which is placed behind the deceased's house on the fourth day after burial. Those who assisted in the ceremony wash their faces, whence its name, at the same time praying to the ghost not to injure them, as they have “spread a table for him.” The same custom is known in Dahome.

346.

Nka ke ura, nwap uyo; uyo usun urua obaha enem mi.

I went to the market and turned aside to eat Uyo (*a cake of fruit like mango*); Uyo of the market took me unwittingly with its sweetness.

N.B.—Meaning, I met by the way something so pleasant that I sat still forgetting or not caring to go further, or to carry out my purpose.

347.

Ikan ata fi inua afu adia ofop; owo asua fi uyu, afu aka ama.

The fire burned your mouth in eating the thing roasted; a man declares himself your enemy, and you go and make friends with him.

348.

Owobi ntan ke ebiet oru.

He grasps a handful of sand, and throws it at (*or towards*) a place, thereby renouncing intercourse with it.

349.

Wuk ubok 'no enye.

Salute a superior with Ubok (i.e., *humble yourself to him*).

N.B.—This is a humble and reverential salutation, made by turning the hands downwards, and touching the earth with the finger tips.

350.

Ekikere se eset ekerede owut eset.

Thought breaks the heart.

351.

Nyaya afu akamade mi ison.

I lay to heart the debt you owe me (i.e., *I do not wish to trust you any farther*).

352.

Ekikere ayana mi ke eset.

My thoughts evade me (i.e., *I cannot fix my thoughts on anything*).

353.

Ayayare uko.

He unmasks the hero (i.e., *shows him to be a coward*).

354.

Owo imum ayareset mkpa.

A quiet man gets angry even to death (i.e., *when once aroused*).

N.B.—So said Mohammed the Apostle: Defend us from the wrath of the mild in spirit.

355.

Abiya iyehe uyai ke ini utum.

Abiya does not dress herself in the working time.

N.B.—Abiya is a bird, the male of which has two long tail feathers during the breeding season (*the Whydah finch; Vidua Paradisiaca* ?) and the proverb is applied to one working in fine clothes.

356.

Eyere aran ye afu.

He smears himself with oil along with you.

N.B.—A brother may ceremoniously dissolve connection with another by drawing the fingers dipped in oil down his own and his brother's arms. On the other hand, fraternity, as has been seen, can be emphatically entered into. These are the rude inventions of an exceedingly sociable race.

357.

Eyet ekpe efep.

He renounces Egbo (i.e., *sells out of the institution*).

358.

Eyine mi nkpo.

He upbraids me with the gift which he gave to me.

N.B.—Said of an ungenerous man.

359.

Osibe idet ono Efik kpupru, ete, ima ikpa yak oyum imo.

He cut his hair and sent it to all Efik (Old Calabar), saying, if he died they should inquire concerning him (i.e., as to the cause of his death).

N.B.—A ceremony formerly performed by one who thought he was dying by witchcraft.

360.

Efik ebrutu anam idut; idut anam Efik atuak iton (or ata mfan).

Old Calabar can inflict any injury it pleases on the countries around; should any of these injure Old Calabar, it may go break its neck (*or eat roots*).

N.B.—Efik Eburutu, or Ebrutu, is the full title of the Efik, or Old Calabar country, but no one can explain the surname. Some conjecture it to have been the name of a man to whom the land in former times belonged.

361.

Idibi ke idem anam owo.

It is the stomach which rules the man.

N.B.—Meaning, Old Calabar feeds all the neighbouring tribes, and therefore has the supremacy.

362.

Idu nte ntan esien.

Idu (a town in Ibibio) is as the sand in the yard (*i.e.*, its men are numerous).

N.B.—This sentence is expressed by drum-beat when the town is summoned to war.

363.

Ama enwan nte Nkuo.

He loves fighting as much as Nkuo (a town or district towards the Adoni, Andoney, or S. Antonio river, between Old Calabar and the Bonny).

364.

Odu nana ke Ononkoni.

It is in Ononkoni (*i.e.*, it is impossible to get it).

N.B.—Ononkoni is the proper name of a place used in proverbs as a kind of Ultima Thule. So they say, It is farther distant than Ononkoni (*i.e.*, a very long way off).

365.

Asana osim Itu ye Uqua.

He has reached Itu and Uqua (*i.e.*, *the uttermost parts*).

N.B.—The Itu and Uqua people are the farthest interior offshoots of Ibibio.

366.

Bon akam no Abasi.

Pray to Abasi (God): *lit.*, shout prayer, much after the fashion of the Pharisees.

N.B.—So, “Bon nye” is to cheer, after Old Calabar fashion, beating the mouth with the hand whilst uttering the sound.

367.

Akaran-Abasi.

The razor of God (*i.e.*, *the swallow*).

368.

Akpa enyin idap.

First eye of sleep (*i.e.*, *first doze*).

369.

Kuno enye apka mi.

Do not give him any of my property.

N.B.—Thus a father disinherits his son.

370.

Akpa ekiko.

Lit., first cock (*i.e.*, cock-crowing time, called by the Anglo-African "Cokkerapeek").

371.

Akpan idike iba idike ita; ama edi iba kiet otu unene.

The Akpan (*first-born son*) is not two or three; if two, one is from Ibo (*i.e.*, a slave).

372.

Edueme enye unuak idion.

He anoints him (*lit.*, applies medicine by rubbing or drawing the finger-points over the place) with Unuak idion (blood, earth, salt, &c., kneaded together and smeared on the body at certain Egbo occasions).

373.

Oduoi mkponison.

He draws down Mkponison (*i.e.*, marks himself by drawing lines with the juice of this rush-like plant, which stains the skin blackish).

374.

Ika oru oduduro nte efe.

That word is bitter as Efe (*the fruit of a shrub*).

N.B.—So we say bitter as gall.

375.

Afu adia nkpo nte Ebe.

You eat like an Ebe (*a grub which burrows in the yam*).

N.B.—Meaning, you are gluttonous.

376.

Enye enyene ekpaha-ika ye ami.

He slanders me (*without naming me, so that I cannot take it up*).

N.B.—Ekpaha-ika is a word spoken to one, but applied to another.

377.

Etubum.

Father of canoe: ship captain (*applied to white traders of importance, as "Abon" to native chiefs*).

378.

Etu iyakita.

The stick with three fish (*i.e., the belt of Orion*).

379.

Mbiaekon nte mfan ikot.

Mbiaekon is as the leaves of the trees.

N.B.—See No. 362.

380.

Eyen akpara.

Son of a widow or harlot (*i.e., a bastard*).

381.

Unen edi ibet mi.

The flesh of the hen is a thing from which I abstain.

N.B.—“Ibet” is a vow of abstinence very common amongst Africans.

382.

Abia-idion ofri ifium.

The medicine-man blows his “Ifium” (*i.e., the toe of a large crab so used*).

383.

Ikon ebok.

Lit., Monkey-cough (i.e., hooping-cough, which resembles the scream of a monkey, and is cured by monkey-soup).

384.

Ikpa Ibibio.

Ibibio rope (*for climbing palm-trees, with two loops or stirrups for the feet. It is opposed to Ikpa mbudukom or Mbudukom rope, which passes round the body.*

385.

Ikpan-idan.

A gift to a widow by her next husband, who does not go through a regular ceremony. The present offered and received signifies that she becomes his wife.

386.

Enye enyene ime; owo an am enye eti nkpo, ododup, isiuruke uyu; anam idiok nkpo, ododup, isiuruke uyu.

He has great equanimity; if a man does him good he does not express his feelings; if bad he is still silent.

387.

Etie imo owo afu ofuro.

Connected with a great man, you will advance.

388.

Enye oduk.

He enters into the state of seclusion named Inam.

N.B.—At the order of the medicine-man, the invalid called by God shuts himself up with a single wife, and uses the same diet as a girl being fattened for marriage. When he again appears in public there is a feast.

389.

Ino ntantafion.

A thief star (*i.e., a falling star which appears to run off like a thief*).

390.

Ebre inuen.

He plays bird.

N.B.—Said of a certain conjuration, when the medicine-man puts something into his mouth and produces the note of a bird.

391.

Iquot okut edim, edim edi.

The frog calls for rain, rain comes.

392.

Isana ete, imo idiaka udia, idia ofun ke ikot.

The Isana (*a sloth-like animal*) says he eats no food, he eats the wind in the bush.

393.

Owo ison-ika.

A man true to his word (*i.e., firm in standing by what he says*).

394.

Itie ata kiet anam owo idap.

A sitting in one place makes a man sleep.

395.

Iton obio ke odon mi.

The longing for my native land seizes me (*i.e., I am home-sick*).

396.

Afu edi Itri.

You are an Itri (*proper name of inveterate smoker and snuffer of the olden time*).

397.

Itup.

A charm enabling the possessor to shoot any one unperceived by those present or the victim.

398.

Iflok ofon akan-inyene.

Knowledge is better than riches.

399.

**Owo anam ono fi, afu ete, imakan mi; ekpayah fi
eyak mi, afu akpanam didie akan mi.**

Somebody has done it for you, so you say you beat me;
if you and I had been left to ourselves, how could you
have beaten me ?

400.

Ono ke mfon.

He gives it of his goodness (*i.e., gratuitously*).

401.

Kobe ukebe.

Take an enema.

N.B.—A purgative is always so administered to “wash’um belly,” as the Anglo-African phrase is.

402.

Eno.

Meaning “Comey,” the equivalent to custom-house dues, paid by ships trading to Old Calabar.

403.

Okpu ndikpa mkpa oru.

He fails to die that death (*i.e., being pardoned, or having his penalty commuted*).

404.

Kukubara akpa.

A monstrous snake, stretching across the river and disturbing the water.

405.

Afu edi manka ekpe.

You are an alien of this Egbo society.

N.B.—Mankpa-ekpe is one who, having bought Egbo in another town, is free to walk through a strange place when Ekpe is in it, but cannot claim a share of entrance fees.

406.

Enye anam mi, ete, Mbap!

She insults me saying Mbap! (or "*Mbap akaya*," an expression of contempt, with corresponding gesture).

407.

Kpi mboni.

To cup.

N.B.—The Mboni is a small cup-like calabash : the natives have no other way of bleeding.

408.

Mo equak Mbuba.

They knock Mbuba (i.e., broken pieces of calabash beaten together to drive disease from a house, after the individual who has died of it has been buried in the bush).

409.

Mfut-enyin itakha mfut-enyin ibun.

Though he look so fierce, never mind, he can do nothing.

410.

Mkpikukik.

A yellow fish, said to invite the crocodile to swallow it as "good medicine," because it is found sticking in the crocodile's throat, and killing him with its spines.

411.

Onim idem esie ke mkpun-nkan.

He holds himself something superior.

N.B.—Mkpun-nkan—"exceeding greatness"—is used in rebuke or ridicule of **ah** inferior who does not respect his superior.

412.

Monku.

Filth.

N.B.—Also unwashed clothes, cap, or clout, sent to a medicine-man to guide his divination when the person does not go himself. It is the practice of our modern mesmerists.

413.

Owo ndita.

One who has a craving for animal food (*apparently a disease in Equatorial Africa*).

414.

Nduokho.

A medicine charm thrown about the place to prevent quarrelling during a wake or a feast.

415.

Obiit.

The after-birth (*which is buried beside a palm-tree planted at the time, so as to grow with the child*).

416.

Obuma.

A thunderbolt (a tree gum formed into mass by electric action in a split tree is often shown as the "bolt").

417.

Otu.

A shrub whose leaves serve to poison or stupefy fish.

N.B.—This unsportsmanlike practice is general in Africa.

418.

Adadan owo.

A man not quite black—reddish.

N.B.—The three complexions in this part of Africa are yellow, red, and black, the latter perhaps being the rarest.

1865 Burton Fan.pdf

WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA;

OR,

A BOOK OF PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY, IDIOMS,
ENIGMAS, AND LACONISMS.

COMPILED BY

RICHARD F. BURTON



BIBLO and TANNEN
NEW YORK
1 9 6 9

VII.

PROVERBIAL SAYINGS AND IDIOMS

IN

THE MPANGWE (FAN) TONGUE.

PROVERBIAL SAYINGS AND IDIOMS IN THE MPANGWE (FAN) TONGUE.



THE following specimens are taken from a sketch of the Grammar and Vocabulary painfully collected during a year's isolated residence at Nenge-Nenge, on the Gaboon River, by the Rev. Messrs. Preston and Adams, of the American Mission.* My friend Mr. Winwood Reade, author of "Savage Africa," was allowed to make a MS. copy, from which I have borrowed.

The Mpangwe is an interesting race. They were introduced to Europe by M. Paul du Chaillu, under the name of "Fans," and his account of their terrible cannibalism found many questioners. Mr. Reade and I both subsequently visited the tribe, and found only the average traces of anthropophagy. Its habitat is on the upper course of the Gaboon River, and it is separated from the seaboard by the kindred Mpongwe, called by the French "les Gabons." The latter, however, is a race rapidly becoming extinct, and the Mpangwe must then temporarily take its place.

* I believe that a sketch of the Grammar and Vocabulary of the Mpangwe dialect has been printed by the Mission Press, Gaboon River.

To borrow Mr. Preston's remarks, "This language is remarkably minute and flexible. New words appear to have been coined in abundance to name new things, or old words have been stretched to meet them. There are few words for the feelings—none to express lofty ideas, refined sentiments, or even commonplace virtues. It is essentially a physical language—a language of the woods and fields, the prairies and rivers; of man's body—his sports, his occupations, his necessities. We learn from this dull catalogue that the people are close observers of Nature, or rather of Nature's clothing. This language, terse and rugged as the naked savages by whom it is used, is but slightly different from the languages of the coast. The soft-spoken Mponge (Gaboon tribe) have it softened, lengthened, and disguised; but the roots are in common. This process of changing the language is to be observed in its first stage in the 'Dikele' (the dialect of the Bakalai). Cut most Dikele words in half, and take the first half—you have the Mpange."

1.

Wa ta sue.

You have become naked (i.e., *you have nothing*).

2.

Kaba a woha abuh.

The goat feels panting (i.e., *is weary*).

N.B.—The more civilized Mpangwe declares that the Bushmen cannot eat goats or fowls, which they look upon as fellow-townsmen, and call the former "brother." They rarely, however, refuse to sell their "brethren."

3.

A ei (ne) nzam nyul.

He is not with sweetness of body (i.e., *he is unkind*).

4.

Yumiki le ki.

Make it strong with strength (i.e., *very strong*).

5.

A ni anuh avol.

He is with a sharp mouth (i.e., *he talks fast*).

6.

Bikangbi jo.

Clouds of sun (i.e., *white clouds*).

7.

A mana lom mvon.

He has sent the curse.

N.B.—Meaning, he has repeated the formula over a boy to blast the thief.

8.

A yem malu osu, a yem malu onvus.

He knows the days before and he knows the days behind.

9.

Jo da ziba.

The sun grows dark (i.e., *sets*).

10.

Mina moba nyat oyoh.

You sit above a cow (i.e., *ride*).

11.

Kal zano.

My sister.

N.B.—A male calls her so, and a female calls her brother “Ndoma zam”—my brother. But when a male speaks of his brother, or a female of her sister, they say “child of my father,” or “child of my mother.”

12.

Mayah mana masi onyenh.

This rum has no Onyenh (i.e., *is watered*).

N.B.—“Onyenh” is the bitter bark which makes palm wine intoxicating.

13.

A lom mokal.

He sends curses.

N.B.—Alluding to a form of curse, in which a kind of dance is executed.

14.

Bapika!

A word said when a woman wishes her child to get up on her back.

1865 Burton Ga.pdf

WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA;

OR,

A BOOK OF PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY, IDIOMS,
ENIGMAS, AND LACONISMS.

COMPILED BY

RICHARD F. BURTON



BIBLO and TANNEN
NEW YORK
1 9 6 9

IV.

PROVERBS

IN

THE GA OR ACCRA LANGUAGE.

PROVERBS IN THE GA OR ACCRA LANGUAGE.

THE Ga or Accra Language is confined to the eastern portion of the Gold Coast, between the Volta River on the east and the Akwapim mountain-mass to the north and the north-west. The number of the Ga-speaking people might amount to 100,000; it is, therefore, one of the tongues which will die out with the advance of civilization. At present it is divided into two dialects, the Ga Proper and the Adanme; the former being used by 40,000 to 50,000, the latter by 50,000 to 60,000 souls.

Of these two, the latter—being the more primitive and the less mixed with foreign elements—is held to be the mother tongue. The area extends from the vicinity of Christiansborg to Ada, or Adda, near the mouth of the Volta River, and in the north it is spoken by sundry of the towns of the Krobo Highlands.

The Ga Proper is used by the people of Jamestown (British Accra), Dutch Accra, Christiansborg, and sundry adjoining villages. On the east it is bounded by the Adanme; on the west by the Oji, Ochi, Otye, or Ashante tongue, with which it is intimately connected.

The language is rich in proverbs and legends: the missionaries have taught the people to commit to writing the

rude beginnings of annals. The stories are numerous and remarkable. There is even a particular name for a class. In Ananu, or spider, is the subject of many superstitions, injuring children that sleep in the same room with it.* It is represented as speaking through the nose, as the local demons are said to do; and its hobbling gait is correctly imitated by the relator with voice and gesture. Finally, it plays a principal part in fables, where the actors are mostly animals; and thus these tales are locally known as Anan-sesen. For a specimen I must refer the reader to the work of the Rev. J. Zimmermann, from whose pages these proverbs are extracted.†

* On this part of the Gold Coast there is a large species of spider of bright yellow and black colours, spinning a silk-coloured thread, which may one day be utilised. Bosman (Letter 17) thus alludes to the animal:—"Going to my chamber at night, in order to go to bed, I found a hideous great spider against the walls; on account of the strangeness of the spectacle I called my sub-factor and both my assistants to see it. We found his body long and his head sharp, broader in the fore than hind part, but not round, as most sorts of spiders are. His legs were as large as a man's finger, ten in number, being hairy, and the thickness of a little finger. The negroes call this spider Ananse, and believe that the first men were made by that creature; and, notwithstanding some of them by conversation with the Europeans are better informed, there are yet a great number that remain of that opinion, out of which folly they are not to be reasoned. This is the greatest piece of ignorance and stupidity that I have observed the negroes guilty of."

The West Africans probably look upon the animal as the ancient Egyptians did the scarabæus.

† A Grammatical Sketch of the Akra, or Ga, Language, with some Specimens of it from the Mouth of the Natives, and a Vocabulary of the same, with an Appendix on the Adanme Dialect. By the Rev. J. Zimmermann. In two vols. Stuttgart, 1858. Printed for the Basel Missionary Society by J. F. Steinkop.

I have adopted the orthography of the reverend gentleman. Most of

1.

Alomte efon mianu bo.

The cat does not cease to cry "mianu."

2.

Ka foo loflo.

A crab does not beget a bird.

3.

Silafo etsoo filafo gbe.

A blind man does not show the way to a blind man.

4.

Kole nya nson.

The Kole (River) flows into the sea.

N.B.—This is quoted as we say, "Walls (or winds) have ears," warning people not to speak out their secrets.

5.

Nme kome fiteo nmei fe.

One (*bad*) nut spoils all.

the sayings explain themselves, or have been explained by the Oji proverbs: in some cases a short interpretation has been added. Nothing can be more distracting than the misprints of the work—too much, however, should not be expected from the printing-house of M. Steinkop, of Stuttgart—and nothing can be more Teutonic than its learned and copious disorder.

6.

Tsofatse ennu tsofa ehaa helatse.**A physician does not drink medicine for the sick.**

7.

Tutsofa ke la yee.**Gunpowder and fire do not agree.**

8.

Sikpon ko enyee gbonyo.**No land hates a dead body.**

9.

Blomo dsee nma ni ayee.**Quarrel is not a food which is eaten.**

10.

Wiemo kpakpa dseo mlifu.**A good word removes anger.**

N.B.—The natives of the Gold Coast have borrowed many of their sayings and not a few of their ideas from Europeans, with whom they have had intercourse for centuries. Compare with Proverbs xv. 1.

11.

Ke dse na le, gbomei fe dio.**If it is dark, all men are black.**

N.B.—So the French say, "Tous les chats sont gris"—at night.

12.

Ke okpongo edsim le, moni ta eno le hu edsimko.

If the horse is mad, he who sits upon it is not also mad.

13.

Nu ni ake-bagbe la le, ataoole kronkron.

Clear water is not wanted for quenching fire.

14.

Ke Okplom ye nii le, Ohwam hu yeo eko.

If the Okplom eat something the Ohwam also eats something.

N.B.—The Okplom and the Ohwam are both animals. The meaning of the saying is, "Suum cuique," "live and let live:" no one should take all to himself.

15.

Ake hinmeii enyo kwee to mli.

Not with both eyes people look into a bottle.

16.

Ke lilei kome ke lileii akpe kpe le etoo biti.

If one tongue meets with a thousand tongues it faints.

17.

Ke onaa lo le, oyeo komi.

If thou find no fish, thou eatest bread.

18.

Humi egbee flo gbemo.

A quiet man makes not the noise of an elephant.

19.

Dare kome guonii yee kpainkpawo wo.

One dollar's (*worth of*) wares does not allow a man to eat a fowl worth sixpence.

N.B.—Cut your coat according to your cloth.

20.

Adudon ni kpa gbonyo hewo le, ekele ate.

A fly which hovers round a dead body will go with it.

21.

Ko ni ake-tfa dfeian kolo le, ake tfaa sia no.

The stick with which people strike a beast in the grass (i.e., *a beast of the field*), they do not strike a house-thing (i.e., *domestic animal*) with.

22.

Nu hie ye feo si ehii mli wo.

The face of water is beautiful, but it is not good to sleep on it.

23.

Ke ona le, no obio mliwo.

If thou get, thou askest to put more to it.

24.

Ke ofo olilei osa okpe le, onan kolo ko osa okpe.

If thou cut off thy tongue and roast and gnaw (it),
thou wilt not get an animal to roast and gnaw.

N.B.—See Oji Proverbs, No. 122.

25.

Noni ake-feo Taki, le ano-fee Ba.

What a Taki is made with, with that they make no Ba.

N.B.—Taki and Ba are figures on playing cards.

26.

Kokonte taoo hulu.

Dried cassava wants sun.

N.B.—Otherwise it spoils.

27.

Akpokplonto taoo ela elee le, no dsi noni esuo ekue ewoo enono mli le.

The terrapin wants not to know its blood, wherefore it
contracts its neck (*and*) puts (*it*) into its shell.

28.

Moni taoomi nakai le, emi ese ehe.

Whoever wants me as I am, is content.

29.

Mei fia yakwoo tso: akpokplonto tekwo le, amane eba.

Everybody goes and climbs a tree: the terrapin went
and climbed; trouble has come.

30.

Mo enyee mo yaka.

Nobody hates anybody without cause.

31.

Bo le, oke, ona nanyo kpakpa, si olee noni ekeo ye ose.

As for thee, thou sayest that thou hast a good friend ;
but thou knowest not what he saith behind thy back.

32.

Gbomo etaa lo yaka

A man is not lean without cause.

33.

Ke Enadsi nyie le, Ntiblii ye mli

If the Enadsi wander, the Ntiblii are among them.

N.B.—The Enadsi are yellow "palm birds," and the Ntiblii are their companions, the red orioles.

34.

Kedsi tso futu tei amli le, efo midsra.

If wood mix with stones, its cutting is difficult.

35.

Moko fee Hatso sisi, si Nokotso sisi afeo.

No one plays under the Hatso, but under the Noko people play.

N.B.—The Hatso, or torch-tree, is full of thorns ; the Noko bears sweet berries.

36.

Kedshomo, miye gbo le eke-dse eman.

If hunger eats a stranger, he brought it from his town.

37.

Ohiafo ebuu man.

A poor man does not watch over the town.

38.

Nudso ekwoo gon.

The brook does not ascend the mountain.

39.

Gbomo tsio koyo.

A man moves the wind.

40.

Mokome efes man.

One makes not a people (or town).

41.

Ohiafo ble egbee.

The poor man's pipe does not sound.

42.

Adeda kuku ekuu see enyo.

A curtailed bill-hook does not break twice.

43.

To gbonyo see kakla.

A dead goat does not fear the knife.

44.

Bai enyo ehii bu kome mli.

Two crocodiles do not live in one hole.

45.

Beni Oda ka akpakai mli, bele Tsunye mibo "Awo!"

When the Oda lies in the basket (*for carrying men*), then the Tsunye (*or house-mother*) cries "Awo."

N.B.—The Oda is a large lizard living on walls; the Tsunye (*literally, house-mother*) is a smaller species inhabiting rooms. None but Europeans, mulattos, kings, and nobles are permitted to be carried in the local hammock, or basket, upon men's heads. *Awo!* (*i.e., "exalted!"*) is the cheer used by bystanders to the rider.

46.

Ke sasabonsam te ya no le, aye we etoo.

If the devil comes to customs (the local worship), he lodges in the witch's house.

N.B.—"Sasabonsam" has been explained before.

47.

Mantsebii edsoo foi kwee yitso.

A prince does not run to look at the (*cut off*) head.

N.B.—Because every head cut off in execution must be shown to the king.

48.

Alomte ke "mlikpamo no:" hewo ni ehee nyon.

The cat says "stretching (i.e., *repose*) is sweet," wherefore it does not buy a slave.

N.B.—Because slaves make the master's hours bitter.

49.

Moko ke kploto haa klan sito.

No one gives a pig to a hyena to keep.

50.

Afi ke: moni gbemi edoomi, ake moni fa mitsere.

The partridge says, "He who kills me does not grieve me, as he who plucks my feathers."

51.

Moko ke enadsi enyo susu fa.

Nobody measures the river with both his feet.

52.

Kedsi sisa mita ode le, onine osuo.

If a ghost shake thy hand, thine arm shrinks.

53.

Batafobi bi enye ake: "Awo, meni yo ohie kpoikpoi le?" Ekele ake: "Wo se le ona momo!"

The young wild hog asked his mother, "Mamma, what are the warts in thy face?" She replied, "By-and-by thou wilt have seen it already."

54.

Ke Didei dse fa mli ni eke ake; ba he miye le, bele ehe miye lelen.

If the Didei leaves the river and says that the crocodile is sick, then it is truly sick.

N.B.—The Didei is a sweet-water fish.

55.

Alanmali fee kpoi amli.

The Alanmali does not play in rocky places.

N.B.—The Alanmali is a small lobster (*prawn?*) which prefers the sea-sand.

56.

Ofoi yitson etaa la.

The horse-fly's head does not lack blood.

57.

Kedai obe fioto le, oyaa Wei.

If thou hast no bag thou does not go to Wei.

N.B.—Wei is a place where grain is bought.

58.

La ye lilei sisi, ni atseo ladso.

Blood is under the tongue, and people spit saliva (i.e. *not blood*).

59.

Moko lee moni fo Okaikoi.

Nobody knows who bare Okaikoi.

N.B.—Okaikoi is the proper name of a person whose parents were unknown.

60.

Moko enoo Sadso emaa abono.

Nobody takes the Sadso and builds a barn with it.

N.B.—The Sadso is the monkey-bread, calabash-tree, or *Adansonia digitata*, whose timber is too soft for building purposes; moreover, in many parts of the Coast there is a superstition that it attracts lightning.

61.

Oda le, ake musunko ko ye, nohewo le ebu ai eto.

The Oda (*lizard*) knows that there is a belly-ache, therefore it lies on its belly (i.e., *prepares*) for it.

62.

Ani ke ake "Tui!" le to egbo?

If people say, "Tui!" is the sheep dead?

N.B.—"Tui!" means "flee!" and is used when driving away smaller animals.

63.

Bonso da kpetenkple mon; ai nsonkotoko gbeole.

The whale is truly very big, but the sea-porcupine (*the sword-fish*?) kills him.

64.

Re lilei ke, eke ahu le, eke dsen yee he gbo.

If the tongue say it be very very long, it cannot vie
with the boa constrictor.

65.

Moko enmee tso he, ni eyaye koyo abo.

Nobody lets go a tree and swings in the air.

66.

Anyiee flo se, ni adu tsone.

Nobody follows an elephant and falls into a trap (*which
his cunning would avoid*).

67.

**Kedsi noko bi oden le, kamia ni gbekebii mititi
online se.**

If nothing is in the palm of thy hand, close it not lest
children pinch its back.

N.B.—Meaning, he is a rogue who gives more than he has. "Ein
schelm ist, der mehr gibt, als er hat." See also the Oji Proverbs,
No. 22.

68.

Man kuku ake sa Tsile.

With a piece of herring they catch the Tsile.

N.B.—The Tsile is a large fish caught in numbers off the Gold
Coast during the months of August and September. In the Oji
dialect the word is "Sire," which resembles in sound the "Shir" (*-fish*)
East Africa.

69.

Nine se ke koko ten yee he gbo.

The back of the hand and the palm do not unite.

70.

Toii enyo si enun sads i enyo.

Two ears, but they do not hear two stories.

71.

Moko etsoo gbeke Nyonmo.

Nobody shows heaven to a child (*because the child itself sees it*).

N.B.—Nyonmo is translated by the missionaries "God," whose face or outside Heaven is considered to be; hence Nyonmo **ke** Sikpon, Heaven and Earth, are both deities, and personal entities. Synonymous with Nyonmo are Nanyonmo, Mawu, and Nyonmo Mawu, also Tse or Ata Nyonmo, *i.e.*, Father God, and even Wotse, Our Father, and Wofe Wotse, Father of all (*Allwater*). As with the classical Jupiter, atmospheric phenomena are connected with Nyonmo, thus they say, Nyonmo rains, lightens, drizzles, knocks, *i.e.*, thunders. Cf. Oji Proverbs, No. 52.

72.

Gbo hinmeii kpleikplei, si enaa man mlinii.

The eyes of a stranger (*may be*) very large, but he does not see the inner things of the town (*or nation*).

73.

Tu fee ye Abrotsiri, ni ebamomo ye Ga.

A gun does not burst in Europe and wound (*people*) in Ga.

N.B.—Abrotsiri or Ablotsiri is land of white people: Europe, America, and even Sierra Leone,—all indifferently called “Oibo” in Yoruba.

74.

Anmoo kuntu kpo.

A blanket (*lit. woollen stuff*) is not made into a knot.

75.

Afi efee nmotse.

The partridge is not greater than the planter.

N.B.—It may also be understood the partridge makes not (*or is not*) the planter.

76.

Yitso taa si, ni nakutso bu fai.

The head does not sit down and the knee put on a hat.

N.B.—In West Africa people sit upon their knees, not as in England.

77.

Tonye akweo aheo tobi.

The mother of the goat is looked at (*if*) the kid is bought.

78.

Dun foo Yo.

The Dun does not beget the Yo.

N.B.—The Dun is a dark-grey antelope about the size of a goat; the Yo is smaller and prettier.

79.

Blo momo hi fe blo he.

An old broom is better than a new one.

N.B.—Because sharper. We say the contrary—new brooms sweep clean. “Neue Besen kehren gut.” And the Hindi proverb, “A new servant will catch a deer.”

80.

Sio yee Tamii.

An elephant does not eat small berries.

N.B.—The Tamii is a sweet berry, not unlike that of ripe coffee.

81.

Dsu baa Dsu kome.

Monday does not come one Monday only.*

82.

Ghomo taa si ni ano tso aye odase.

A person does not sit (*or exist*) whilst they take a tree to witness.

83.

Fa tsio fa yi se.

A river moves a river on.

* The Ga week has seven days, three pairs and one single. Thus, Monday (the first day) and Tuesday are Dsu and Dsufo, Wednesday is Sho, Thursday and Friday are So and Soha, Saturday and Sunday are Ho and Hogba. Neither can the signification of the words nor can the reason of the peculiar arrangement be discovered. Hogba, or Sunday, is kept as a day of rest by many of the heathen, who hold it to be the seventh or last of the week—doubtless a neo-Christian idea.

84.

Ke oke tso wo bu mli ni onaa noni yo mli le, ke oke onine wo mli le, ona noni dsi.

If thou put a stick into a hole and dost not see what is in, if thou put thy hand in thou knowest what it is.

85.

Ke atere ni onaa le, ke akpo na si le, ona.

If something is carried on the head and thou seest it not, if it be put down thou seest it.

86.

Ho lei ano flo ho.

With the Ho's long tail the Ho is bound.

N.B.—The Ho is a very small monkey with large head and long tail.

87.

Nine lakaa mo.

The hand does not deceive one.

88.

Abui ni he do la le, esaa kpa.

A hot needle burns the thread.

89.

Gbomo fon hi fe sia flo.

A bad person is better than an empty house.

N.B.—Shows the extraordinary sociability of negroes, who have a positive dread of solitude.

90.

Woni ke "Kno" le, ayee asiile.

People eat not without him that saith "it is good."

N.B.—Literally, "him who says it is sweet, people when eating do not leave"—meaning, that it would be shameful (according to native ideas) if he were not asked to sit down.

91.

Ke olee onanyo se le, okaa to ohaale.

If thou knowest not what is behind thy neighbour's back, thou dost not venture (*to buy*) a sheep for him.

92.

Mantsesei dsee lai kakadan ni mei enyo ta no.

A thorn is not a long piece of wood that two persons may sit upon it.

93.

Moko hamotsomo dsee mo simo.

To precede a man is not to leave him.

94.

Suie be ni ayee Lolowa.

There is no cabbage, therefore (*lit. then*) people eat herbs.

N.B.—The Lolowa is a herb eaten only when vegetables are scarce.

95.

Ke osi nme le, eko ya omama mli.

If thou pound palm nuts, some will stain thy cloth.

96.

Tso ni te la mli le, ena nala.

A stick that goes into fire will begin to burn (*lit. its end burns*).

97.

Lo ni no le amane ye he.

About a sweet fish there is danger.

98.

Moko enoo sigbemohe efee wohe.

Nobody makes a falling place (i.e., a place where people fall) his sleeping-place.

99.

Nabu lee, ake etse mife fei.

The mouth does not know that its master is afraid.

100.

Moko ke mama he taa mama momo ten.

No man puts (*a piece of*) new cloth into an old garment.

N.B.—Cf. Matt. ix. 16, "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment," &c. From this it is probably borrowed.

101.

Awoo ni alaa.

No sleep, no dream.

102.

Soro kwe, soro kwe bie.

It is one thing to look, it is another to look here.

103.

Nine abeku ahiisi ni gbonyo sio mo.

The left hand remains not (*quiet*), when a dead body strikes at one.

N.B.—When a man dies under suspicion of poison, they carry about his corpee, which strikes at his murderer.

104.

Moni homo ye le ni egbo le, abii edeka si.

Whom hunger ate and he died, people enquire not after his box.

105.

Odomirifa ye noko ni eyeo dsikule etsan ka.

Had Odomirifa aught to eat, he would not dig for crabs.

N.B.—Odomirifa is a proper name.

106.

Moko enaa tso ni eke ehinmeii tare na.

Nobody sees a stick and rubs his eyes at it.

107.

Mo hie-wiemo ke tsomo le, edsee mo dsemo.

To warn a man is not to scold him.

108.

Se nuu wiemo.

The back does not bear a word.

109.

Ke odsu mantse he le, oke eko dsuo ohe.

If thou wash a king, thou wastest thyself with some (*of his soap, &c.*).

110.

Moko ke Asamanukpa daa tetfa.

Nobody vies with the Asamanukpa in stone-throwing.

N.B.—Asamanukpa means head-ghost, or spectre-elder; it is described as a chimpanzee, or a baboon, living on the islands of the Volta River, where the Sisai, or shades of the departed, have their Gbohιάdse, Hades, or dead-world.

111.

Nye be tsofa.

Hate has no medicine.

112.

Heni gwanten sumoo le, dsei enoo eyen etaa.

Where the sheep likes, there it places its white (*spot*).

113.

Moko naa tamo Opale na.

Nobody sees as Opale sees.

114.

Hienmalo be ni afeo ebii ahe.

The Hienmalo is absent, so they play with his cubs.

N.B.—Hienmalo, “forehead-scratcher,” and Kotse, “lord of the bush,” are epithets of the Olowo, or leopard.

115.

Moko enmoo kpo ni esi egonti.

No one makes a knot and leaves his thumb (i.e., *without his thumb*).

116.

Na tamo oblan.

A wife is like a giant.

117.

Moni nmo kpo le, le ele fenemo.

He who makes a knot, knows to loose it.

118.

Soro moko yitson, soro moko yitson.

Different one man's head, different the others.

N.B.—Meaning, that everybody has his own head, his peculiarities.

119.

Ga se gbe dsi gbe.

The way after (*the people*) Ga, that is the way.

N.B.—The Rev. Mr. Zimmermann here remarks, that “the Ga people consider themselves a leading people.” I should be thankful, as an amateur anthropologist, or comparative-anthropologist, vulgarly called ethnologist, to know the name of the race that does not.

120.

Miwo tsu mihao, si ote mikpai.

I thatch for you a house, you hide my strings.

N.B.—The houses are thatched with grass or palm-leaves, which are bound on with strings.

121.

Gbeke edfaa akpokplonto, si gbeke le wao dfa.

A child does not break a land tortoise, but a child knows how to break a snail.

N.B.—The Hindi proverb is, “Boys’ play is death to the birds.”

122.

Beni omia onanyo ko le onanyo hu mi miao.

When thou pressest a friend of thine, thy friend also presseth thee.

123.

Ohwam, kedsì ote ni bai le eha ten le hewo le, dsemo; si wose le, ke nme le tsu le, owaye eko.

Ohwam, if thou go (*and see*) that the leaves have covered the palm-tree, remove them, for by-and-bye, when the nuts are ripe, thou will eat some.

N.B.—The Ohwam is an animal that lives on palm-nuts.

124.

Noni bako da le, eye nso se.

What has not come before, is behind, the sea.

N.B.—Meaning, that you can say so, as people have not seen it.

125.

Moko enaa moko oblan, ni ehuru eyi si.

Nobody sees the giant slave of another and jumps for joy.

126.

Kele mli ye nii kule, onufu ye noko ni eyeo.

If in length there were aught, the serpent would have something to eat.

N.B.—On the contrary, the Somal of East Africa say, "Length is honourable even in wood."

127.

Abe mama ni abio yo si.

He has no cloth and calls for a woman.

N.B.—The Mama is the native garment, a square of calico, worn as a toga by day and used as a sheet at night. The want of it shows extreme poverty.

128.

Suilafo fee mlu mli.

A blind man does not play in the dust.

129.

Tim tim dsu amada teomo, si ehe saomo mli yo.

To brag is not to plant bananas: in clearing the ground about them, it (*the work*) consists.

130.

Ahio man ni oheo ben.

Do people dwell in a town where there is no warm (*food*) ?

131.

Moko ehoo nii eyamaa nmanmasa, ake ectao ewekumei abaye.

Nobody cooks food and puts it on the dust-hill, to seek his relatives that they may eat.

132.

Ke otso kolo tsokpemo le, ke ewo hu ema ena.

If thou teach a brute stick-chewing, even if it sleeps, it sticks in its mouth.

N.B.—Tsokpemo, or stick-chewing, alludes to the use of the which in these regions answers to our tooth-brush.

133.

Kokote wonu ekpa efie si: si masro sika Dsoaru?

The Kokote soup is poured out—should I regard the sovereign ?

N.B.—The Kokote is a sea-fish of delicate flavour, and the Dsoaru is a measure of gold-dust worth about £1.

134.

Okukuba ke elei ke le, sone efa.

(*No sooner*) the Okukuba said his tail was long, than the weasel boasted.

N.B.—The Okukuba is a small field animal with a long tail.

135.

Tso ni aklonto be he le, ekwo dara.

A tree which has no fork, its ascent is difficult.

136.

Dse ana ni ase wohe.

It will get dark and a sleeping-place will be found.

137.

Babi gboo fa.

A young crocodile does not die in the river.

N.B.—The river being its proper place.

138.

Ke oke wo nkpla able le, ehie sooo.

If thou huskest corn with the fowl, it will not esteem thee.

139.

Atfaa mo te, ni awo sukukuli atso ehie.

Nobody (*intending to*) cast a stone at one, takes up a clod and shows it to him.

140.

Moni eto ke moni himo yeole le: namo aho aha.

One is full, the other is hungry—to whom do people sell?

141.

Moni tsuo nii hao le, eyaa ke emusu flo.

He who works for thee, does not go with an empty belly.

142.

Blofo-okpo ke: Moni yeo nii ehaao le, le ogbeo la ohaa.

The European pigeon says, "He who eats and gives (*food*) to thee, for him thou quenchest the fire."

N.B.—Blofo, in the Ga language, meaning anything European, from the radical "Blo," corn or maize, because, when the first strangers came to the coast, the women were grinding, and said, "These men are white as corn."

143.

Moko enoo adeda etoo lema he.

No one takes a bill-hook and cuts an axe with it.

144.

Wonu no kolo le na, si nine enaa eke-fa.

Soup is sweet to an animal, but the animal has no hand to take it up with.

145.

Ke dsulo ke ele dsu eyadsu okplem.

If a thief say he knows how to steal, let him steal a cannon.

146.

Moko ke enumo etoo nyonma he.

No one puts (*down*) five for ten.

147.

Ke odi adudon se le owuleo ofia mli.

If thou care (*to kill*) the fly, thou wilt hurt thy boil.

148.

Ohi lo, si oye mlebo.

Thou hatest meat, and—thou eatest liver!

149.

Ke akpokplonto hewo kule atfaa tu.

If it were for the land-tortoise's sake, no gun would be fired.

150.

Fieholo ko ehoko ba da.

A cabbage-dealer has never sold (*more*) leaves.

N.B.—If you believe him. Our "No one cries bad fish."

151.

Kasolo yeo nii kaku mli.

The potter eats out of a potsherd.

152.

Ke oye lele mli le, odsieo mli nu.

If thou art in a vessel thou takest out the water.

153.

Oben ni ayaa hewo le oke, nso le nme.

Thou art not on (*it*) when people go (*upon it*), therefore thou saidst "the sea is calm."

154.

Ke fio ke: eta lo le, dsee tsokpo kome ne enan.

If the elephant say he is thin, he has not only one tray full.

N.B.—But much more.

155.

Gbo edsaa konolo.

A stranger does not divide Ko-meat.

N.B.—Ko is a festive food.

156.

Ga weku tamo mampam fo, ke okpa le, bele ohe gbla.

A Ga family is like crocodile's fat, if thou anoint thyself (*with it*) thy skin cracks.

N.B.—Warning the world not to meddle with so great a people as the Ga.

157.

Tsebi ke, Dse na: si nyebi ke, Dse nako.

A father-child says it is night, but a mother-child says it is not night.

N.B.—Tsebi is a half-brother by the same father but another mother, often contrasted with Nyebi or Nyemi, a half-brother by the same mother, which is held to be a nearer relationship than the former. Mr. Zimmermann believes that the proverb relates to family quarrels springing from polygamy.

158.

Momosa le Kwaw Mensa; mitao Fete aya, si mibasro ni atsule Gua.

Kwaw Mensa once wished to go to Fete; it was different when he was sent to Gua.

N.B.—Kwaw Mensa is the name of a man; Fete is distant from Accra ten miles, Gua, or Cape Coast Castle, sixty.

159.

Ke otao nme le, ya Tutu.

If thou wish for palm-nuts, go to Tutu.

N.B.—Tutu is a town in Akwapim, where palms abound.

160.

Moko enoo nine abeku etsoo emangbe.

No one shows the way to his town with the left hand.

161.

Tsina wolo see tsina.

A cow-herd does not fear a cow.

162.

Gbe ko gbe edsee.

A dog does not bite a dog till (*blood*) comes out.

163.

Wo ni edsoo le, akokobesa eke-yaa.

A fowl that is not good, with spices it goes (i.e., *is eaten*).

164.

Gbobilo lee kolo helatse hewo ni etfale tu.

A hunter knows not sick game, therefore he shoots it.

165.

Loflo ni edsen tsere le, mra ekaseo fikimo.

A bird which does not get feathers, quickly it learns to fly.

N.B.—Said of the precocious.

166.

Fioflo adudon ye gbe toi.

Little by little a fly eats a dog's ear.

167.

Ke lo ko ke, ewo fo ahu le, eke kploto yee he gbo.

If an animal say it be very fat, it does not rival the pig.

168.

Sisi ke nwei yee gbo.

Earth and heaven do not come together.

169.

Oia gbii fa fe to gbii.

The days of poverty are more than the days of superfluity.

170.

Osumo nyontsomei nyonma ke kpawo.

Thou wilt serve seventeen masters.

N.B.—Cf. Matt. vi. 24 : " No man can serve two masters," &c.

171.

Gbi ni amo kploto le, batafo atso hamo.

The day when the pig will be caught, the wild boar will lead the way.

172.

Ke akpokplonto ke; wa hewo, dsikule aweo tako ye sikpon ne no.

If the land-tortoise would say (*it is*), for hardness' sake people would take up pads upon this earth.

N.B.—Meaning, if it depended upon the saying of the land-tortoise, that it is too hard, &c., because of its hard shell.

173.

Asantemei wonu no, si no fo mli tso.

The soup of the Ashante is tasteful, but there is too much salt in it.

N.B.—The people whom we call Ashan'tee, and sometimes Ashantee', are known upon the Gold Coast as Ashante, or Ashinte. The proverb alludes to their cruelties. The Hindus say, "The rule of Harbhúm," a place (Ilahabad) celebrated for injustice.

174.

Ehe wa tamo ba.

He is as hard as a crocodile.

175.

Homo yele take klan.

He is as hungry as a hyæna.

176.

Moko yee yele na ye su mli.

Nobody buys yams in the ground.

N.B.—Somewhat like No. 179.

177.

Gbeke ma koi ni onukpa hio sisi.

A child builds a second story and an old man dwells down-stairs.

N.B.—Relates to the changes and chances of life.

178.

Tantra dsimi, dsa no mifo ye.

I am a Tantra (*-fish*): in the market I bear (*children*).

N.B.—Fo means also to beget. So a common wedding salutation is, "Okele afo bii nyonma ke enyo!"—Mayst thou beget (or bear) twelve children with her (or him).

179.

Ahoo alomte ye fioto mli, si adsieole fan.

A cat is not sold in a bag, but openly produced.

180.

Aaye Koko enmore daikule aaye yekose.

If people would eat Koko raw, they would eat it so behind the bush (i.e., *in the country, not in the town*).

N.B.—Koko is the smaller yam, which is eaten roasted or boiled. In Oji the proverb is, "Vobedi Koko amonno-a, anka vodi n'afu so;" and the meaning is the same.

181.

Wa ke, ehewo daikule tu egbee ye kon.

The snail says, for his sake no gun would go into the bush.

182.

Ananu taa si, ni abe gugo akase le.

A spider does not sit, that people may teach it to speak through the nose.

N.B.—Because it can or is supposed to be able to do that already.

183.

Ke niyenii ye sia le, akce ake ayadsu bayele ke-ba sia.

If food be in the house, people do not say, "Yams shall be stolen and brought."

184.

Klan kplaa tsina.

A hyæna does not drive a cow.

185.

Ke gbe ke edseke ahu le ehoo man he.

If a wag says it is very long, it does not pass the town (i.e., *it leads to it*).

186.

Dede mife kolo si eke Kokon.

Dede is a fool, but she says it is Kokon.

N.B.—Dede or Kokon are women's names.

187.

Kakraka feo gbele nii si egboo.

The cockroach seems to die (lit. *makes things of death*), but does not die.

N.B.—The "roach" is very troublesome in the Gold Coast houses. Mr. Zimmermann translates Kakraka or Kاكلake "chafer."

188.

Wo nane egbee ebi.

The foot of a fowl does not kill its chicken.

189.

Onukpa boo madai ano toi.

An elder hearkens not to the thing (i.e., *the gossip*) of towns.

190.

Ke okakla foo le, obon oke-woo.

If thy knife cut thee thou sheathest it.

N.B.—Meaning, thou dost not cast it away.

191.

Ohenyelo ke: otao egbo.

Thine enemy saith, "Thou wishest my death."

192.

Lebi dan dseo fu mon, si wiemo kpakpa dseon.

In the morning the mouth hath an evil savour, but a good word comes out of it.

193.

Niiatse foo dsoi fe, si efoko yafodso da.

A rich man composes every dance, but he has never composed a dance of weeping.

194.

Ke owye yo adfaman le, onaa mlifu.

If thou marry a harlot, thou dost not wax wroth (*at what may happen*).

195.

Sane fon ni yo dsen hewo ni ke afo bi ni awiewo atsoole.

For the evil that exists in the world it is, that thy child when born is instructed.

196.

Ke owo mama ni esaao le, ni atseoo oblafo.

If thou wear a cloth that fits thee not (*it happens*) that thou art called an executioner.

N.B.—The criminal's clothes being the African Calcraft's perquisites.

197.

Nyomotse naa mlifu.

A debtor does not get angry.

198.

Nyon edsee gbi kome ni efo kpen.

The moon does not appear one day (*only*) and cease to shine.

199.

Ke ohe waa oke: Tako ehii.

If thou art weak, thou sayest the pad is not good.

N.B.—Men and women carry load-pads on their heads. The proverb is our “Bad workmen complain of their tools.”

200.

Dsee noko, si noko dsi no.

“It is nothing!”—but that is something.

N.B.—“Dsee noko” is a general evasive answer to enquiries; the proverb is the reply of the man who will not be put off. In the Oji dialect the precisely similar saying is, “Enye biribi, na eye biribi ara nen.

201.

Ke batafo ke: dsee enan ena non.

If the wild boar say it is not his foot-print, still it is it.

202.

Moko efce kolo sii enyo.

Nobody is twice a fool.

203.

Eto tso egbe eno.

He cut a tree, and fell over it himself.

N.B.—Cf. Proverbs xxviii. 10: “Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit.”

204.

Moko hie gboo sii enyo.
Nobody is twice ashamed.

205.

Moni ena da le, eke ehi.
He who has wine says it is good.

N.B.—See No. 150. The Hindi proverb is, "No one calls his own butter-milk sour."

206.

Mlikpamo dsi nii dsikule alomte ye eko.
If stretching were wealth, the cat would be rich.

207.

Yitso kome eyaa adsina.
One head does not go a-counselling.

208.

Ohia ni ehia Akuamunyo hewo ni eke Ayigbenyo nio.
On account of the poverty that affects the Akwamu-
man, he calls himself a man of Ayigbe.

N.B.—Akwamu is the name of a tribe on the Volta River, about fifty miles from its mouth. The Ayigbe is part of the people known to us as Krepe, or Eipe people; they call themselves Ewe and their tongue Wegbe. They live on the east and west of the Volta River, and, being near the sea, are wealthier than their inland brethren.

209.

Ke ofe kolo le ni o haale gbe, etsoono.

If thou drive a beast and give it no way, it turns upon thee.

210.

Noni gbekebii fe ye klotia le, no onukpai le feo ye ma le mli.

What the children do at the ends (*of the town*), that the elders do in the town.

211.

Moko ke sisai gbaa ta.

Nobody wars with ghosts.

212.

Moko den dsee oden.

Somebody's hand is not thy hand.

213.

Noko ni ayee le, ahoo.

What is not eaten is not cooked.

214.

Fio ebe kose dsikule kule wo kolo wulu dsile.

Were no elephant in the jungle, the buffalo would be a great animal.

215.

Opasafo ke: Midasefo ye Akyem.

Saith the liar, "My witness is in Akyem.

N.B.—Akyem is here used for any far place.

216.

Tsu moko nwei ni hwan esisi atfere.

To send some one up and to draw away the ladder from under him.

217.

Abolo flo ehii yeli.

Dry bread is not good eating.

218.

Noko eko onufa!

Something has bitten the serpent!

219.

Adum ke: Ewon dsi ehinmei.

The Adum (*monkey*) saith, "My eye be my fetish" (*or protecting charm*).

N.B.—Under the word "won" Mr. Zimmermann thus explains "African theology." According to the people of Accra, on the Gold Coast, God (*Nyomo*) is the highest being, the only Creator of Heaven and Earth. The "fetishes" (*wodsi*), heaven, earth, sea, rivers, trees, and similar objects, are sub-deities, spiritual and personal, who direct and govern the world. There are also demons,

male and female, good and bad, common to all the fetishes, or confined to a part, to a tribe, a town, a family, or a single person. A person may possess a fetish, or demon, or be possessed by one. "Besides which, there are innumerable things, consecrated to, belonging to, or made effectual by, a fetish—as cords (*wonkpai*) to be tied about the body, or the house; teeth, chains, rings, &c., worn, and the like, which gave rise to the absurd belief, that the African makes everything, even a bottle or a cork, his god: and hasty travellers and other people, not having time to ask and to learn, have sustained this saying, whilst a comparison with religious things and superstitions in the very heart of Christendom would have fully explained the matter without casting the African together, no more with men, but with brutes."

220.

Akeo ekome dani akeo enyo.

People say "one" before they say "two."

221.

Toi ni gbaa nabu na.

It is the ear that troubles the mouth.

1865 Burton Kanuri.pdf

WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA;

OR,

A BOOK OF PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY, IDIOMS,
ENIGMAS, AND LACONISMS.

COMPILED BY

RICHARD F. BURTON



BIBLO and TANNEN
NEW YORK
1 9 6 9

II.

PROVERBS

IN

THE KANURI TONGUE.

PROVERBS IN THE KANURI TONGUE.

THE following Proverbs and Sayings, Laconisms and Figurative Expressions, are taken from the Rev. M. Koelle's work.* The reader will bear in mind that the

* African Native Literature, or Proverbs, Tales, Fables, and Historical Fragments in the Kanuri or Bornu Language; to which are added, a Translation of the above and a Kanuri-English Vocabulary. By the Rev. S. W. Koelle, Church Missionary. London, Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, 1854. I have retained the reverend gentleman's orthography, necessarily omitting, however, signs and accents.

Bornu (Bornou, Bernu) Proper, according to Dr. Barth (vol. ii. p. 201) is the nucleus of the Great Central African (and now quasi-Moslem) Empire in its second stage, after Kanem had been given up. It is bounded on the north by the Tibbu, south by Mandara, to the east by the Chad Lake, and to the west by a small body of water, popularly known as the Yeou. The limits usually assigned are 200 miles along the western shore of the larger lake, and about the same distance inland. The people, who call themselves Kanuri or Kanowry, are known by twenty cuts on each side of the face, one on the centre of the forehead, six on each arm, six on each leg or thigh, four on each breast, and nine on each side, a total of ninety-one cuts. The country is an extensive plain, once very populous; in the chief market, "Angornu," the crowd has been estimated at 80,000 to 100,000 souls. Taking the word Bornu in its widest sense, the population has been raised to five millions. The old capital, Birni, is said to have covered from five to six square miles, and to have contained 200,000 souls. Early in the present century, however, it was overrun with dreadful devastation by its western neighbours, the Fellatahs. The

Bornuese, though described by some travellers as "complete negroes both in form and feature," are, like the Mandengas and Wolofs, a Moslem race, with a considerable amount of Semitic innervation, and their proverbs will contrast strongly with those current amongst the Pagans of the Gold Coasts and Yoruba.

1.

Nontsenin kampunye lanentsia, ate gerganemmi.

If one who knows thee not, or a blind man scolds thee, do not become angry.

2.

Ago komande ntsinite, dunon manem, pandem bago.

If thou seekest to obtain by force what the Lord has not given thee, thou wilt not obtain it.

3.

Kabu datsia, kargun bago.

The days being finished, there is no medicine.

N.B.—Meaning, if one's time to live is completed, no medicine can ward off death.

country recovered under the Shaykh who was visited by Major Denham in 1823; this man, a native of Kanem, of humble birth but great energy, rallied round him a band of spearmen, had a vision of the Prophet, hoisted the green flag, and, after a ten months' campaign, liberated his country, and replaced the rightful sultan on the throne. The picture of this worthy, "squatting on a sort of cane-basket, covered with silk," must be fresh in the recollection of every reader of African travels.

4.

Ago fugube rumin, ngafobe rum bago.

Thou seest what is before, not what is behind thee.

N.B.—Meaning, thou knowest the past, but not the future.

5.

Angalte silman gani karga, kalalan karga.

Wisdom is not in the eye, but in the head.

6.

Kampuro ago yiminya, ka muskontsibeturo gana-gem, dugo siro ye; wageya niro "ago simmi" tsenia, ka muskontsibetiye sedaro naptain.

If thou givest anything to a blind man, lay it first upon the staff in his hand ere thou givest it to him; in the next world, when he shall say, "thou hast not given me anything!" the staff in his hand will bear witness.

7.

Gedi kanadiben tsannawa.

At the bottom of patience there is heaven.

8.

Kam burgo souartia derege ademmaro kotsi.

Being prepared before-hand is better than after-thought.

9.

Kam neontse bagote si manantse bago dabu kam meoguben.

He that has no house, has no word in society.

10.

Mana kamuye ndi nemetsia, tilo gonem, tilo kolone.

If a woman speaks two words, take one and leave the other.

11.

Burgontse burgo kenyeribe gadi.

He is as cunning as a weazel.

12.

Kamte ago ngala kammo tsedia, nemgalate pattsegin bago.

If a man confers a benefit upon another, that benefit is not lost (to himself).

13.

Kannu kam tsebui.

Fire devours a man.

N.B.—Meaning, "He is in great affliction."

14.

Kam dantse keli kwoya, sima na kannubero gertegin.

He draws near the fire when meat is raw.

N.B.—He who desires an object, is glad to adopt the requisite measures. The Persian proverb is, "For an object, men kiss the donkey's tail."

15.

Kam kam tserageni dugo ago nantsen tsimageni.

One does not love another, if one does not accept anything from him.

N.B.—Amongst all Africans, Moslems as well as Pagans, friendship seems to consist simply of giving and taking presents.

16.

Tama sugo diniabe.

Hope is the pillar of the world.

17.

Leman sugo diniabe.

Riches are the pillar of the world.

18.

Leman sugo robe.

Property is the prop of life.

19.

Soba tsirebe musko ndin tei.

Hold a true friend with both thy hands.

20.

Kargenem kamuro yimia, niga ntsetso.

If thou givest thy heart to a woman, she will kill thee.

N.B.—This and the sneer against the veracity of the sex in No. 10 are truly Semitic.

21.

Kugui timi litsia, wu niga beantseskin.

I will pay thee when fowls cut their teeth.

N.B.—Like the Latin “Ad Græcas kalendas.”

22.

**Kargete, sima kam kannuro tsatin, sima kam tsan-
naro tsatin.**

It is the heart that carries one to hell or to heaven.

23.

Kam kargen kam tseteite sima kerdigo.

He is a heathen who holds another in his heart.

N.B.—Meaning, who bears malice.

24.

**Kam neme am wurabe tsatseranite neme kitabube
tsetserani, kam neme kitabube tsatseranite, neme
komandebe tsetserani.**

He who does not believe what the elders say, will not believe the sayings of the Book (the Bible); and he who does not believe the sayings of the Book, will not believe what the Lord says.

N.B.—This was apparently dictated to M. Koelle by some Christian convert. He informs us, that Pato Ramaba, *i. e.*, Heaven, was the original Kanuri name for God, now generally superseded by the Arabic “Allah.”

25.

Afi nemketsindo, wote kargenemga kamuro yimmi.

Whatever be thy intimacy, never give thy heart to a woman.

26.

Kaliae afi nemgalantse yaye tatanem dibigo tseteni.

Whatever be the goodness of a slave, he does not come up to a bad son.

27.

Kalia ago kanmersibe gani: kaliaro mersanemia, sima niga ntsetso.

A slave is not a thing to be trusted: if thou trustest a slave he will slay thee.

28.

Kam yantse ganawate asirntse tsakkata.

One who has a younger brother, his secrets are covered.

N.B.—Meaning, he has a confidential friend—in Africa.

29.

Kamte ago ngala dimia, Allaye ngalan niro patsartsin.

If one does good, Allah will interpret it to him for good.

30.

Komande kammo leman tsi yaye, tata bago kwoya, lemante manantse bago.

If our Lord gives riches to a man, and there are no children, the riches have no word.

N.B.—Meaning, they have no object, no value.

31.

Kam komande tata tsinnama, asirtse Allaye tsakts-enamago.

The man to whom the Lord gives children, his secrets Allah covers.

32.

Ago fugubete, komande genya, ngudo dabu kuru-guamai tsurui bago.

As to what is future, even a bird with a long neck cannot see it, but the Lord only.

33.

Dinia yermanem bagoro, yermanemma ngalگو.

Since thou hast no benefactor in this world, the having one in the next will be all the more pleasant.

N.B.—A consolation to the poor.

34.

Kam yantse tsambuna bagoya, siga wadadai tsatin.

He whose mother is no more, him distress carries off.

N.B.—Amongst all the Moslem negroes, the mother is ever the best friend. So Mungo Park's Mandenga said, "Strike me, but do not abuse my mother!"

35.

Kam asirtse kamuro gultsegia, kamute siga tsaba setanbero tseako.

If a man tells his secrets to his wife, she will bring him into the way of Satan.

N.B.—Rather a contrast to the English proverb, "He who would thrive must ask his wife!"

36.

Kamuye tsaba ngalaro kanga tsakin bago.

A woman never brings a man into the right way.

37.

Kam kana kuguibe ntsetsoma bago, sai Alla

No one can kill the appetite of fowls save Allah.

N.B.—Meaning, "Man cannot satisfy them."

38.

**Ago dinianyin koron kirnyinno tata tseragenago
bago.**

Nothing in the world loves its young more than a she-
slave and an ass.

39.

Ni talaga kwoya, ate galifu sobanemmi.

If thou art poor, do not make a rich man thy friend.

40.

Nusotoro lenemia, ati pato galifuben tsamnemmi.

If thou goest to a foreign land, do not alight at a rich
man's house.

41.

Bulturo dinia watsi tsabalan.

It became day whilst the hyæna was on its way.

N.B.—Meaning, "The man's strength was broken before he
attained his object."

42.

Wuma mei "tsiga kamagunbe."**I am "King Elephant-bag."**

N.B.—Meaning, "I am so strong that I can carry an elephant in a bag," or "I am so powerful as to think nothing too difficult for me."

43.

Wu tawangi dugo tsabalan wuro dinia wasegi.

I arose early, but the dawning day overtook me on the way.

N.B.—Meaning, "I married a wife in early youth, but had no children by her."

44.

Kanuwari nonemmi kwoya, kanuwate nonemiba?

If thou dost not know hate, dost thou know indifference?

N.B.—Meaning, "How is it thou didst not perceive that I love thee not, even though thou didst not discover that I hate thee?"

45.

Wu gesga gana ruske, kolonge; kura gongimba?

If I see a small tree, shall I leave it and take a large one?

N.B.—Meaning, "If I have a chance of marrying a young man whom I can easily manage, shall I pass him by and marry one who is too strong for me?"

46.

A certain man took a long journey, on which he passed a rich man who had many children, all of them girls; he saluted him, saying, "*Aba talaga wuse*"—poor man, how

art thou? This man was vexed to hear himself called poor. He next passed a poor man who had many little children, all of whom were boys, and him he saluted, saying, "*Aba galifu wuse*"—rich man! how art thou? This man was vexed on account of being called rich. He next met a man who had neither wife nor children, and who, at night, slept in a pitch-dark house without lamp; him he saluted, saying, "*Aba kampu wuse*"—blind man! how art thou? This man was vexed at being called blind. At last he met a man lying under a *kangar*, a tree with very long and sharp thorns; him he saluted, saying, "*Aba koa ngurdegi wuse*"—lame man! how art thou? This man was vexed to hear himself called lame. When the traveller returned, after a long time, he visited these men again, and saluted each by the directly opposite title; but then they were again vexed, since, during his absence, the prophecy contained in his former addresses had been realised.

47.

A certain man had a most beautiful daughter who was beset by many suitors. But as soon as they were told that the sole condition on which they could obtain her was to bale out a brook with a ground nut shell (what is about half the size of a walnut shell), they always walked away in disappointment. However, at last one took heart of grace, and began the task. He obtained the beauty; for the father said, "*kam ago tsuru baditsia tsido*"—he who undertakes what he says, will do it.

N.B.—The Hindoos have a somewhat similar fabliau concerning a sand-piper, who, in revenge for the loss of his young, began to

dry up Samudra Devta, or the ocean. Both teach men not to admit the word "impossible" into their vocabularies, and to consider nothing too high for human will to attain. So it is popularly said amongst ourselves that, if a man really determined to win it, he might wear the crown of England.

48.

Once in a famine a woman asked her husband to look after the *pot au feu* while she was going to fetch water. On her returning unobserved by him, she found that when skimming off the foam or scum he filled a calabash with it, and hid it somewhere, supposing it to be the best part of the food. The woman did not let him know that she had seen him play this trick. But at dinner, when the husband, trusting in what he had hid, said to her, "give me only a little, and let our children have plenty," she said to him, "*abantsa ate bilguro bigela gullemmi*"—father! do not call scum, harvest! He did not understand what this meant till he went to eat what he had put aside for himself, and, as might be expected, found the calabash empty.

49.

The question was once asked—" *Kamunyin koanganyin nduntsa ngubugo?*" i.e., Who are more in number, the women or the men? One answered, "*Koangama ganago, kamuma ngubugo; ago kamuga nguburo tsedenate, koanga mana kamube pantsinte siga kamuro tamissagei, atemaro kamute ngubu,*" i.e., Men are the minority, women are the majority; the reason why there are more women is this, that men who listen to what women say, are counted as women.

50.

The Fula once sent the following message to the governor of a town—" *Koa belama Tsarami Daduimate tegera tseba dugo andi siro keam yate dinye yeyogo!*"—literally, May Sarah's son, the governor of Dadui, make dumplings, till we come and bring him milk, and mash them, that we may drink together! This message refers to the Fula practice of mashing dumplings in milk and then drinking it: the meaning is, "Prepare thyself for war, and get dinner ready for us: we are about to attack and to defeat thee."

51.

On the other hand, the Burmese governor returned the following message to the Fula—" *Sandi koanga kwoya, isa, ngo beri denesgana, kalu tsagute, wua sandyua buiye!*"—literally, If they are men, let them come; behold, I have cooked meat, let them bring the sauce, that I and they may eat it. The meaning of this is, "I am prepared for war and battle: we will fight as soon as you come."

52.

Sintse tilo dinian, tilo lairan.

He has one foot in this world and one in the next.

N.B.—Meaning, he is in imminent danger: as we say, "He has one foot in the grave."

53.

Andi ngafo lukranben bonye.

We shall sleep behind the Koran.

N.B.—Meaning, "We shall feel more secure after an oath."

54.

Kalantselan dangi.

I stand on his head (i.e., *surpass him*).

N.B.—Kala, the head, is much used in phrases, e. g., I see my head, i.e., I think or deliberate; I lift up my head, i.e., I am highly pleased; I take out a person's head, i.e., I can deliver him; I hold a person's head, i.e., I help or protect him. No. 59.

55.

Wute dabundon wu bago.

As for me, I shall not be in your midst.

N.B.—Meaning, "I will have nothing to do with you."

56.

Kargeni na tilon naptсени.

My heart did not sit down in one place (i.e., *I was uneasy, disquieted*).

57.

Tigini amtsi.

My skin is cold (i.e., *I am sad, grieved*).

58.

Tai manaro or Lebalaro yakeskin.

I put my mouth into the matter or dispute (i.e., *I meddle with it*).

59.

Alla kamuro kalantse tsin.

Allah gives a woman her head.

N.B.—Meaning. God gives a safe delivery: so they say a woman has obtained her head, i.e., has been safely confined. Also,

"*Kalani pandeski*" means, I have received my head, *i.e.*, I have escaped safely, I have been delivered. This expression is used especially in regard to the delivery of a woman in childbed, but also in regard to any other deliverance. Similarly, "Allah gives a person his head," *i.e.*, saves, rescues him: used by man referring to recovery from illness, return from battle, &c. See No. 54.

60.

Pesga gereskin.

I tie a face (*i.e.*, *pull a long face, look displeased*).

61.

Manande ngalema tsaba tilon tsulugeni.

Our word never left one and the same road.

N.B.—Meaning, "We never fell out or disputed with one another."

62.

Sandi manantsa na tiloro tsasake.

They put their words in one and the same place.

N.B.—Meaning, "they are all of one mind."

63.

Afiyaye Allaye agemesagenate sitema ruiyen.

What Allah has decreed for us, that we shall see (*i.e.*, *experience*).

64.

Allah artseki beiantse!

Allah give thee good luck.

N.B.—So also they say Allah bless thee—keep thee—grant thee long life.

65.

Alla barganem or Alla bargando (gotse).

May Allah take his blessing from you.

N.B.—A great curse.

66.

Bernade.

A bug : the Bornuese, like the pagans of Unyamwezi, consider the smell aromatic, and they suppose the aroma of Paradise and that of bugs to be of the same nature.

67.

Kam kalantsen nigawa besgero letsin bago.

One who has been three years married does not go to the Besge, or dancing place of young people.

68.

Ngadza.

A loup-garou, one who can transform himself into a hyæna, as in Abyssinia. According to M. Koelle's informant, there is a town in Gazir called Kabutiloa, in which every person possesses the gift of lycanthropy.

69.

Na dabu kambe.

One's native place (literally, where one's "dabu" or umbilical string was buried after birth).

70.

Dinia fatsar kamtsi.

The dawn has cut through—i.e., day dawns. They

distinguish between *gubogum burgobe*, the first cock-crowing, between two and three in the morning, and *gubogum dcregebe*, the second cock-crowing near dawn.

71.

Dinia kan dabutsi.

The sun is in the centre of the world (i.e., *It is noon*).

72.

Ago gedintse bagote nemero, si aram.

It is forbidden to tell anything that has no foundation.

73.

Karge gereskin or Karge taskin.

I tie my heart, or I hold my heart (i.e., *I am composed, comforted*).

N.B.—*Karge*, or heart, occurs in many curious phrases, e.g., the heart is cut, i.e., courage is gone; the heart is sweet, i.e., one is glad. A "black heart" is a bad heart.

74.

Meiram kirga koitsin bago.

A princess never makes a slave her friend.

75.

Kungana pingin.

To divine by cowrie shells, which are thrown on the ground, and which show futurity by the manner in which they fall.

76.

Lukran buskin.

I eat the Lukran (i.e., *Koran*).

N.B.—The Bornuese swear by placing the hand first upon the Koran and then upon forehead and breast.

77.

Ngudi pingin.

I take out poverty (i.e., *the guinea-worm*).

N.B.—The guinea-worm is called "poverty," because the disease always reappears at the beginning of the rains, thus preventing the sufferers from attending to their farms, and reducing them to destitution.

78.

Ngurtu kamawunga da tsogo tilon kotsena, kamawun gurtuga sila tsogo tilon kotsena.

A hippopotamus exceeds an elephant by one basket of flesh, and an elephant exceeds a hippopotamus by one basket of bones.

79.

Allabe rambuskin.

I pay what I owe to Allah.

N.B.—I pay the debt of nature—die.

80.

Serifu.

An albino, much feared for supernatural powers in Borneo. These men can have meat roasted on their naked arms, or plunge them into boiling water without injury.

81.

Nyamnyam.

A cannibal: this is a general and not a proper name, and the Nyamnyams have a king.

82.

Koliram or Kuriram.

A wood-demon or ghost, supposed to be of gigantic stature, with long flowing hair and pale skin like the Fulas. He lives in large hollow trees, from which he issues after sunset, at midnight, and before sunrise. If any one comes in his way, he salutes him with a fearful slap in the face—sometimes kills him. He often halloas as if to call people, but he never carries them away as the water-demon does. The Kuriram remarkably resembles the Rakshasa of the Hindoos.

83.

Ngamaram.

A water-demon, living in wells, cisterns, pools, rivers, and lakes, and in shape resembling a white man. These beings often catch people who fetch water after night has set in. If a male demon seizes a man, he slays him at once; if a woman, he keeps her for a month or a year, and then dismisses her. *V. v.*—a she-fiend kills the women and keeps the men alive.

1865 Burton Oji.pdf

WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA;

OR,

A BOOK OF PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY, IDIOMS,
ENIGMAS, AND LACONISMS.

COMPILED BY

RICHARD F. BURTON



BIBLO and TANNEN
NEW YORK
1 9 6 9

III.

PROVERBS

IN

THE OJI TONGUE.

PROVERBS IN THE OJI TONGUE.

THE Oji, Ochi, or Otyi language is spoken throughout the empire of Ashante, which Englishmen know as Ashantee. To the south of Ashante again, and extending along the sea-coast, are their congeners, the Fante (Fantee), who use the same tongue, but with certain dialectic differences, rendering it less pure and agreeable to the ear than that of the inlanders. Besides these two large divisions, there are three small and non-maritime countries, eastward of Ashante, namely, Akim, Akwapim, and Akwamu, generally known as Akwambu, who are also Oji-speakers. They have, at times, been subdued by the overwhelming power of Ashante; but they are at present independent, and governed by their own chiefs and caboceers, under the protection of the English, who succeeded the Danes in that part of the coast. The idiom of Akim resembles that of its neighbour Ashante. Akwapim* lies to the east of Akim, and Akwamu to the north-east of Akwapim, bordering on the river Volta.

* This province is in about the meridian of Greenwich, and 6° N. lat. It is separated from the sea by Ga or Accra-land. The country is well wooded and mountainous, containing seventeen villages, each with its own chief, who owes a loose allegiance to the headman of Akropong.

All these are gold-producing lands, and when the present inexplicable state of apathy and degradation shall have passed away, they and their language will become of importance. The Oji is spoken by probably two millions of souls. The proverbs quoted below are borrowed from the work of the Rev. N. Riis.*

The two preceding collections are made from negroid races, and bear unmistakeable signs of Allah and the Koran. We now come to the purely Hamitic and Negro literature, in which occasionally a Moslem or a Christian sentiment can be seen dimly reflected. As the reader has been warned in the preface, a greater amount of illustration now becomes necessary.

* Grammatical Outline of the Oji Language, with especial Reference to the Akwapim Dialect; together with a Collection of Proverbs of the Natives, by Rev. H. N. Riis. Basel, Bahnmaier's Buchhandlung (C. Detloff), 1854.

The collection of Mmehusem, or proverbs, is assisted by explanatory notes, which are inserted with a little pruning—generally a necessary operation in Teutonic “works”—and the orthography of the reverend author has been preserved. His Grammar is by no means so transcendental as that of the Rev. M. Zimmerman, and the Vocabulary is both useful and simple. It is hard to understand, however, why the reverend gentleman retains the obsolete letter C; and why in the order of letters Y should be promoted to precedence over K.

1.

Abe baakon na sei ensa.

One palm tree spoils the palm wine.

N.B.—Among the Oji the trees are felled—generally speaking, a number at a time—and a hole being cut in each, the juice distils into pots or bottles placed to receive it. The produce is removed twice a day, when the contents of the pots are all poured into a single large vessel. If one tree, therefore, has given bad wine, the whole will be spoiled. Thus we say, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

2.

Wo to adur-a ebi ka w'ano.

If you lay poison (i. e., *attempt to poison others*), some will touch *your* mouth.

3.

Abofra bo envaw, na ommo akekire.

A child may crush a snail, but it will not crush a tortoise.

N.B.—Means, do not attempt what is beyond your strength: little strength may effect objects within its sphere, but will prove vain beyond it.

4.

Abofra nte n'enna ni n'agya asem-a, odi aduan-a en-kyinne nim.

If a child does not hear his mother's and his father's word, he (*shall*) eat food (*which*) salt is not in.

5.

Tekrema na kun onipa, na tekrema na gyai nipa.

The tongue kills man and the tongue saves man.

N.B.—So the Hindi proverb: The tongue may mount an elephant, or put the head in peril. The necessity of biting and bridling the tongue is a favourite theme with the semi-civilised. Cf. The Proverbs of Scripture, chaps. vi., xii., xv., xviii., and James iii. 5.

6.

Woye abofra ensirow akotia.

If you are a child do not deride a short man.

N.B.—Because you do not know whether you may not, when grown up, be in the same predicament. Said of what the Greeks call Epichærekaki as opposed to the Epichæragathi.

7.

Onipa mfon kwa; okom enni no-a na, odi ekaw.

A man does not fast without a cause; if he does not suffer hunger, he is in debt.

8.

Asem monne fata hienni.

Hard words are fit for the poor.

9.

Sika ben wo-a, ehoo.

When gold comes near to you, it glistens.

N.B.—Means that an alluring object placed before the eyes stimulates desire. So we say "opportunity makes the thief."

10.

Onipa wonno no nna 'niara.

You do not always love (the same) man.

N.B.—Literally, "A man you do not love him all days;" meaning that friendship and love are things that sometimes change.

11.

Vode kokroko na di emmim-a, anka sinno beba fie.

If by bodily strength violence were committed, an elephant would come into the town.

N.B.—Meaning that if might, not law, prevail, the elephant, which is the strongest of beasts, would be master.

12.

Wonko bi afum da, wose: mi enku ni kuafo.

If you never went into another man's plantation, you would say, "I am the only planter."

N.B.—Meaning, that the home-dweller has homely wits, and that men are prone to judge of all things from what happens under their own eyes.

13.

Didime na yi bronni nansin adi.

A feast uncovers a European's wooden leg.

N.B.—Didime is a feast of course followed by a "big drink," which—"in vino veritas"—makes people forget self-respect, and exposes defects which are usually concealed. Bronni or Bro (in the Ga language Blofo) something or somebody European, is probably derived from Abro, Maize or Indian corn, for a reason to be quoted, in the Ga proverbs. Abrokirri, "Europe," is, however, explained by Mr. Riis as, perhaps, a corruption of "Portugal."

14.

Tapo ni abanm.

There is not a halfpenny in his palace.

N.B.—The “Tapo” is twenty cowries, or two farthings. “Aban” is a house built of stone, a castle or palace opposed to “dan,” the negro square or oblong hut of clay-plastered sticks roofed with grass or palm leaves. The proverb alludes to pride and poverty, and also answers to our “great cry and little wool.” The Hindis say, there is not a thread in the house, and the blockhead wants a turban.

15.

Dabi otenten benya, akotia nnya.

(*This time the short one has got it, but*) another time the long one will get it, and the short one will not get it (i. e., *the object of their common pursuit*).

N.B.—Meaning, that fortune is fickle; celeres quatit alas.

16.

Wonyi m'aye-a, ensei me din.

If you do not praise me, do not spoil my name (*or character*).

17.

Akekire se, ensa ko na ensa ba.

The tortoise says, The hand goes and the hand comes.

N.B.—Less literally “if you draw back your hand (i. e., *give me no presents*), I draw back mine.” It means, as you behave to me so shall I behave to you. Mr. Riis remarks, “it is a peculiar feature of the Oji proverbs that they are often referred to animals.” Cf. 27, 33, 89, 90, 118, 120, 188, &c. The “peculiarity” may, I believe, be extended to the proverbs of all semi-civilised peoples.

18.

Ohi enni ni yonku.

A poor man has no friend.

19.

Obi nnoa aduan, enko ta enkwanta, enfyufye menni.

Nobody cooks food and places it in the road to seek a guest.

N.B.—Meaning, do not invert the order of things : begin with the beginning.

20.

Yenim se mogya vo yen anom, na yefi entesu.

We know there is blood in our mouth, but we throw out spittle.

N.B.—Though it is a fact that our mouth is lined with blood, yet we eject saliva only : we do not give away all, we keep the best things for our own use. Charity begins at home.

21.

Obi nko toa hahinni vo ne bon ano, na onse nse; wo hu bon.

Nobody assails a Hahinni at the door of his nest, and says to him, you stink.

N.B.—The Hahinni is a large black fetid ant. The proverb means "every man's house is his castle,"—a truer saying in Africa than in England.

22.

Biribi ni wo ensem-a, emmua no, na mmofra ntiti eki.

If there is nothing in your hand do not shut it, and let the children pick outside.

N.B.—The closed hand would denote that it contains a present, and thus cause disappointment if found to be empty. The proverb means, "Do not tantalise others : "do not excite hopes or give promises which you do not intend to fulfil."

23.

Efe, ne enye aniberre.

It is fine, but excites no desire.

N.B.—Said of persons and things which, with brilliant qualities, unite so many drawbacks, that they become objects of aversion rather than of desire.

24.

Wonim tu-a, tu wo dyon.

If you can pull out, pull out your own grey hairs.

N.B.—Attend to your own faults before you reprehend others; remove the beam from your own eye, before remarking the mote in your brother's.

25.

Wanya wohu-a, to wo pon mu da.

If you are rich, always shut your door.

N.B.—In Ashante, Dahome, and Benin, the reputation of wealth must be carefully avoided.

26.

Ka akekire enni envaw enku-a, anka otuo nto vo wu-ram da.

If there were only snails and tortoises, no gun would ever be fired in the jungle.

N.B.—Because snails and tortoises can be caught without a gun : ways and means must be proportioned to the object in view.

27.

Oduacen se, nea 'ko ne yem no, enni nede, na nea vo n'afonnom no, enye nede.

The monkey says, that which has gone into his belly is his ; but what is in his mouth is not his.

N.B.—Any external possession is uncertain, however well secured.

28.

Biribi enkyen ogya koko.

There is nothing more red (*or so red as*) fire.

29.

Obi nkyerre bi nse: to enkyienne di.

A person will not say to another, buy salt (*and*) eat.

N.B.—It is folly to command or to exhort another in matters which his own necessities will compel him to undertake.

30.

Wo ensa dam-a, vonni engyaw.

If your hand is in (*the dish*) they eat not, leave not.

N.B.—Meaning, they eat not so as to leave nothing for you; you are sure of getting your share. West Africans feed with their fingers from the common pot or dish around which they are seated.

31.

Ohia na ma odece ye akoo.

Poverty makes a free man become a slave.

32.

Asum vo "soa mi."

At the watering place they say, "Lift for (*i. e. help*) me!"

N.B.—The "Asum" is a place where water gathers: it here represents the Asiatic well and the English pump. The women fetch the necessary and each assists the other to lift the full pot upon her head, such being the usual way of carrying it home. The proverb probably means "In the every day affairs of life the want of mutual assistance is felt."

33.

Nwansana se: nea 'ka ekirri na, edoso.

Saith the fly, "What is left behind is a great deal."

N.B.—This alludes to the fly trimming itself with its hind legs, which it continues as long as it considers that something is left to be done. The proverb exhorts men not to weary of any labour, until they have carried out their purposes.

34.

Akoko di wo yonku aivu-a, pam no; dabi obedi wode.

When a fowl eats your neighbour's corn, drive it away; another time it will eat yours.

35.

Wode kokrobeti ko ayi-a, vode sotorre buaw.

If you go to customs with your thumb (*stretched out*), they will answer you with blows.

N.B.—"Ayi" is a public festival celebrated with processions, dancing, drumming, shooting, and drinking, which cause the streets to be crowded. "Customs" is the Anglo-African corruption of the Portuguese "Costume," way, habit. To stretch forth the thumb at a person is a sign of mockery and contempt. The proverb corresponds with the French "Le moine répond comme l'abbé chante."

36.

Ayisa vame ana, ose; woma mi se woma wo ba, anka mame.

The orphan (*when asked*) whether he had enough, said, "If you had given to me as you gave to your (*own*) child, I should have had enough."

37.

Wo yem ye-a, womfa wo yirre nkye.

If you are good-natured, you will not give away your wife.

N.B.—A good man should be thoroughly attached to his family.

38.

Abofra eni anso panyin-a, ofre empopa se haha.

If the child does not honour the aged, it will call a palm branch "haha."

N.B.—"Haha" is a word of no signification. The proverb means that a child so perverse as to withhold respect from his seniors, would be capable of any absurdity.

39.

Opete, wodi bi bin, na obi nni wode.

Vulture! thou eatest anybody's egesta, but nobody eats thine.

N.B.—This is addressed to sycophants and parasites, who seek feasts and presents from others without ever making a return.

40.

Hamma hamma kyirre ketebo.

String (*added to*) string will bind even a leopard.

N.B.—Meaning, that united strength and repeated efforts will effect great things. *Gutta cavat lapidem.*

41.

Obi nto akokonini, na ommon obi akura.

One does not buy a cock, and he does not crow in one's plantation.

N.B.—Meaning, nobody buys a cock, and lets him crow in another man's field.

42.

Obaifo rekoe! Obaifo rekoe! na wonye baifo-a, wontya wo eni.

(When the cry is raised) "There goes a witch! There goes a witch!" if you are no witch you will not turn round.

N.B.—"Baifo," from "bayi," sorcery, means wizard or witch : the saying corresponds with our insinuation touching the cap fitting.

43.

Onipa reba, wonse nse, bera.

When a man is coming, you will not say "Come!"

N.B.—As we say, "Don't spur a willing horse."

44.

Wo se enye-a, nea wota foro ekirri, ara nen.

Though your teeth are bad, they are just what you lick.

N.B.—Though your friends and relations, or neighbours and fellow-citizens, are disagreeable people, do not drop all intercourse with them.

45.

Sasa bonsam ko ayi-a, osoe baifo fi.

When the fiend goes to the Sabbath (*or customs*), he lodges with the sorcerer.

N.B.—"Sasabonsam," earth-devil, from "asase," earth, and "abonsam," a fiend,* is a monstrous being, living in the deepest

* Missionaries translate Abonsam, the Devil, "conceived to be an evil spirit living in the upper regions (our popular heaven) and reigning in Abonsam Kru (in Accra, Abonsam-dse) over the spirits (or rather the shades) of wicked men." It is probably some evil ghost who has obtained a general bad name. The Sasa Abonsam corresponds after a fashion with the Erdgeist, the Wald-teufel and the Kobold of the Germans.

recesses of the forest, hostile to man, especially priestly man, but intimate with wizard and witch. The proverb means "Birds of a feather flock together," "Like for like, and Nan for Nicholas;" or, as the Persians say,

"Like flies with like,
Pigeon with pigeon, hawk with hawk."

46.

Ogya ni atodru nna.

Fire and gunpowder do not lie together.

N.B.—So we say of oil and water.

47.

Osram emfi da korro, entya manm.

The moon does not appear on one day, does not pass over the town.

N.B.—Meaning, when the new moon appears, it does not pass over the town the same day, a work is not completed as soon as begun. Rome was not built in a day. "Petit à petit l'oiseau fait son nid."

48.

Osu to, na vonyiyi ade vo sum-a, enye von ni bo.

When rain falls, and they must remove the things in the rain, it is not them and (*or together with*) the stones.

N.B.—Meaning, that you do not remove the stones with the things. The proverb is applied to those who o'erstep the modesty of nature, who, in doing a useful and necessary action, add to it what is useless and unnecessary.

49.

"Vontu enkinne! Vontu enkinne!" na yereda entu.

"They shall pull us! they shall pull us!" then we shall sleep without fire.

N.B.—Meaning, when they cry out, "Throw it away! Throw it (*the smoking piece of wood*) away!" we shall lie freezing. West

Africans who have scanty clothing sleep by the side of a fire during the colder nights of the year. When troubled by the smoke, they order a slave, or some one handy, to remove the cause of offence. If, however, this be done too often, the fire will disappear, and the cold will become more troublesome than the smoke was. The proverb warns men to choose the lesser of two evils, not to incur the risk of a greater, for the purpose of ridding oneself of the smaller, trouble.

50.

Obi ntya akoko ano, emma akye.

Any (*person*) does not get a-head of the cock, does not give salutation.

N.B.—Less literally, “nobody says good morning before the cock,” i. e., no one will go out before cockcrow, and bid his friends good morning. Everything must be done in due season.

51.

Kwatterrekwa se obema wo entama, tie ne din.

When a rascal says that he will give you a coat, hear (i. e., *inquire for*) his name.

N.B.—Meaning, before you trust him, seek information about him. And generally, be careful whom you trust, particularly where there is just cause of suspicion.

52.

Mi-a, mida-'yanya, minhu nyankupon,* na wo wo-butu ho.

I who lie on my back do not see the sky, and you are lying on your belly.

N.B.—Meaning, if one who has the best opportunities of effecting an object cannot succeed, they who have fewer advantages must expect to fail.

* Nyankupon in Akwapim and Onyame in Ashante, and equivalent to Nyonmo in the Ga or Accra language, signify the Supreme

53.

Obi mpra, na obi nsesaw.

When one sweeps another does not carry away (*the sweepings*).

N.B.—Literally, “A person does not sweep, and another does not take up,” i. e., the same person must do both. So the European proverbs, “Quod quisque introivit, ipsi est excedendum :” As you make your bed so you must lie. “Comme on fait son lit on se couche.”

Being. The word is usually derived from “Yonku” and “pon,” i. e., greatest friend. Such at least is the composition explained by Mr. J. Beecham (Ashantee and the Gold Coast, pp. 171 and 172). Of this Mr. Riis remarks, “there can be no doubt, that these derivations (alluding also to ‘Nyame’ being derived from ‘ye,’ to make, to create) are futile, being based on a misapprehension of the proper phonetical form of the words : besides the explanations of Nyankupon by ‘greatest friend,’ stand in direct opposition with the notions of the Supreme Being entertained by the negroes. What may be said with some degree of certainty is that Nyankupon is a compound of ‘nyanku’ and ‘pon.’ ‘Pon’ seems, from its occurrence in other words, to signify great or high. The derivation of ‘nyanku’ is uncertain, but very probably ‘nyame’ and ‘nyanku’ are from the same root, and but two different forms. Their root is perhaps ‘nyan,’ to awake, supposing the original meaning of this verb to be to rise, to raise ; so that ‘nyanku’ and ‘nyame’ in their primary signification would be synonyms of ‘Sorro,’ the high, that which is above. Pon is added for emphasis, so that the meaning of Nyankupon would be the very high, the Most High. This hypothesis would easily account for the frequent use of both words in the material sense of sky or firmament, God being identified with the visible expanse of the heavens, as in English ‘heaven’—so the Chinese use ‘Tien’—is sometimes said instead of God.” This derivation will appear to many as hard to swallow as Mr. Beecham’s.

Mr. Riis (sub voc. Nyankupon) also remarks that this Supreme Being is conceived by the negroes of the Oji tribe as a great spirit living above, the author of all good, eternal and omnipotent, to whom the creation of the world and the natural phenomena of the atmosphere, as thunder, lightning, and rain, are ascribed, and by whom the spirits of good men deceased are conveyed to live under his dominion in

54.

Akosua mmo musu, na Akua mfa.

Akosua does not mischief, and Akua does not take (*it*).

N.B.—Less literally, when Akosua does mischief, Akua is not punished for it. Meaning, “No one should suffer for the sins of another.”

55.

Okom di wo-a, womfa wo ensa abien nnidi.

Though you are hungry, you do not eat with both hands.

N.B.—Meaning, “However pressing be the necessity, it must be kept within the bounds of propriety.”

56.

Da se 'nne enti na vaye aivuwow.

For the sake of a day like to-day they have made the nails.

N.B.—Less literally, “for a day like the present the nails are made.” This is a threat of future revenge. Meaning, “I, too, have

Nyankuponfi or Nyankuponkru. On the other hand, however, he is considered too high above earth to care for the affairs of man, thus perfectly agreeing with Pliny, Lib. 2, chap. 5 :—“It is ridiculous to suppose that the great head of all things, whatever it be, pays any regard to human affairs.” The negro deity even has committed them to Bosom (vulg. Bossum), imaginary beings worshipped by the negroes and called “Fetishes” by Europeans. Mr. Riis concludes with saying—“The idea of him as a supreme spirit is obscure and uncertain, and often confounded with the visible heavens or sky, the upper world (sorro) which lies beyond human reach ; and hence the same word is used also for heavens, sky, and even for rain and thunder.”

It is easy to discover the traces of a belief in the Deity, an idea doubtless derived by the West African negroes in olden times from the Portuguese. I have elsewhere recorded my belief that their conception of a God is physical, not metaphysical.

the power of injuring, and will at some time repay you for my present injury."

57.

Hai! hai! na 'mma akroma 'nye kese.

(*The cry of*) Hai! Hai! has not suffered the hawk to grow big.

N.B.—"Hai," is an interjection used in frightening off birds of prey. The proverb means, if the hawk had been allowed to eat his fill of fowl and chicken, he would have become stronger and more dangerous: if evil were left unrestrained we should soon be overpowered by it.

58.

Nea ogwan do na, ode ne fufu sie.

A sheep puts his white (*wool*) on his favourite places.

N.B.—Literally, "What a sheep loves (*there*) he puts his white." The sheep is supposed to be spotted, and the white is considered prettier than the black. The meaning is, you will bestow your best upon those you love.

59.

Obi ye ne biribi-a, muma onye, na owu ben.

When a person does his something (i. e., *his business*), let him do it, for death is coming on.

N.B.—Meaning, let every one do what he pleases, as life is short, it is little matter how he acts, all will be the same a hundred years hence; it is a characteristic negro sentiment, showing their indolence, nonchalance, and improvidence.

60.

**Mahu kontromfi-a, ne yirr 'awu, na vasiw atimun;
na wo vansan de, wofa hu den?**

I have seen a baboon (*cynocephalus*), whose wife was

dead, and he wore long hair; but thou, antelope, what is that to thee?

N.B.—The hair is allowed to grow long in sign of mourning, and the proverb appears to be directed against improper meddling with the affairs of others.

61.

**Akwamuseum dew enti na vofi entesu to ensueni-a,
aka befa ko.**

When in consequence of good news spittle is thrown upon the surface of the water, the "aka" will snatch it up.

N.B.—The "aka" is a river fish: the meaning of the proverb is obscure.

62.

Wo ura tan wo-a na, ofre wo akooa dece.

If your master hates you, he calls you a free man.

N.B.—Addressed to a slave: by the act of hating you, your master declares you to be free, for nobody hates his own property.

63.

Hu m' enti so mam enti na atyo abien nam.

For the sake of "blow upon my eye for me," two antelopes walk.

N.B.—Less literally, "that the one may blow upon the other's eye, two antelopes walk in company." It means, that in case of one of them getting dust into his eye, the other will remove it by blowing upon it. The general idea conveyed by the proverb is, that associations are formed for the sake of mutual support.

64.

Obi nhu bi koaberaan, eneru nsi.

Nobody jumps (*for joy*) on seeing a strong slave of another.

N.B.—Meaning, that you do not rejoice at an advantage in which you yourself have no share.

65.

Obi nte nantya namon.

Nobody will buy the footprints of a bullock.

N.B.—The footprints of a bullock here representing anything that cannot be turned to use.

66.

Vose: manya,—na vonse nse: yanya.

You say, "I have,"—not, "We have."

N.B.—Meaning, that one man is master of a family, not several persons at once.

67.

Obi do w'a na, oserre wo hu ade.

If any one loves you, he will beg of you.

N.B.—Begging is a sign of love, because, according to West African ideas, friendship consists in mutually giving and receiving presents.

68.

Dua bata bo, eye tya na.

A piece of wood lying close to a stone, it is good to cut (i.e., *it will bear a blow*).

N.B.—Meaning, that it is good enough, or strong enough, to bear being cut, to resist a stroke. The idea implied is, "Even the feeble may be rendered powerful by leaning upon those that can support them."

69.

W'agya akoe tya dua, ose; eye merow.

When your father's slave is chopping wood, he says it is soft.

N.B.—If he said it is hard, it would sound like a complaint offensive to his master, and likely to produce evil consequences.

West Africans are astute in practising, regardless of truth, the rule laid down in this proverb, viz., "Accommodate your tongue to time and circumstance."

70.

Wosen mi adidi-a, misen wo nna.

If you surpass me in eating, I surpass you in sleeping.

N.B.—Meaning, do not think that you alone possess all the talents: if you surpass others in one respect, you are deficient in another.

71.

Wopata adaban abien ce gyem-a, baakon cew.

If you put two pieces of iron together in the fire, one will be burned.

N.B.—This is addressed to a blacksmith: if he puts two pieces of iron into the fire at the same time, one will be burned while he is engaged in hammering the other. The meaning is, in performing a work, its different parts must be taken in hand in due order; haste, instead of furthering, will defeat its own object.

72.

Se nea atoa te na, boha te.

As the sword is, so is the scabbard.

N.B.—The idea to be conveyed probably is, that two persons associating together may be supposed to be alike in manners and principles. As we say, Tell me what your friends are, and I will tell you what you are.—"Dis-moi qui tu hantes, je te dirai qui tu es."

73.

Ayonkugorr' enti na okoto nnya ti.

In consequence of friends-playing the crab has no head.

N.B.—Friends-playing means feasting, drinking, dancing, gambling, and similar entertainments, at one's own expense. The

crab is said to have no head, because that member does not project from the body, and the animal is supposed in the proverb to have lost it by "ayonkugorro," or junketing. A warning is thus enforced against dissipation, by pointing to its evil consequences. To comprehend the bearing of such admonition, it must be remembered that West Africans, besides being hard drinkers, are desperate gamblers, who will stake not only their property but their families and themselves. This probably was of more frequent occurrence than at present, during the old slave-trading days of the Gold Coast, yet I have heard of it throughout Africa: in Unyamwezi, during my visit there, a negro staked his aged mother against a cow.

74.

Wohu koto eni-a, wose; eye dua.

When you see the eyes of a crab, you will say they are splinters of wood.

N.B.—Being placed on pedicles or stalks, they are compared to splinters. The proverb corresponds with our "Appearances are deceitful."—"Il ne faut pas juger les gens sur la mine."

75.

Esonno afon-a, wongwa no berow so.

Though an elephant be thin, yet you will not carve it on a palm-leaf.

N.B.—The idea to be conveyed is, that the great and noble, though in a fallen state, are different from those of mean and servile origin, and will not submit to unbecoming treatment.

76.

Broferr'a nnya 'mmerre sorro, na nnya nye de.

A papaw-fruit that has not yet ripened on high (i.e., *on the tree*) is not yet sweet.

N.B.—Meaning, the good qualities of a person or thing cannot appear before going through the usual stages of development, which lead gradually to a state of perfection.

77.

Wobo aberriki-a na, wohn ne ura fi kwan.

If you beat a goat you will find his master's home's way (i.e., *the way to its master's house*).

N.B.—Because, goats when frightened try to run home. The meaning seems to be, "The farthest way about is often the nearest way home;" or, "Ingenuity will devise many ways to attain its ends."

78.

Wope aka asem akyere Nyankupon-a na, wokakyerre emframa.

If you want to tell anything to Heaven, tell it to the wind.

N.B.—The meaning of this saying seems to be the same as that of 77.

79.

Nea womferre no, okoto nea woferre no eki.

He whom you do not respect, will seat himself behind him whom you do respect.

N.B.—In order to seek his protection when you are about to assail him. The feeble lean for support on the strong.

80.

Eniwa fufu nkum anuma.

A white eye does not kill a bird.

N.B.—A white eye means a glance of hatred or ill-will. The meaning is, looks may be menacing, but they cannot hurt you.

81.

Aboa kokoseki kasa kyerre bonukyerre fo-a, ote.

When the animal vulture speaks to the big drum he (*the latter*) hears it.

N.B.—The “kokoseki,” or “pete,” is the turkey-buzzard, one of the most useful birds in West Africa, feeding on carrion, and, therefore, most sacred to the Fetish. The “bonukyerre,” or “boma,” is a long but narrow drum, garnished with the skulls of hostile chiefs, and daubed with the blood of human sacrifices : its hollow sounds are heard on all state occasions, and, besides being sacred, it is supposed to be initiated in the mysteries of Fetishism. Hence the meaning seems to be, that members of the secret brotherhoods, of which many exist in West Africa, understand one another, and can communicate by means unknown to the multitude.

82.

Tekrema kro cia tekrena apim-a, eto piti.

If one tongue meets a thousand tongues, it faints.

83.

Obrofotefo na oma bronni ye aye.

The European-understander (i.e., *he who can speak with the European*) may induce him to do good.

N.B.—Meaning, may persuade him to give presents, the object ever held in view by West Africans in their intercourse with white men. The proverb informs us, that to get all possible profit out of a person or thing, one must know him or it thoroughly.

84.

Eti ntetew-a, wongyai ekyow soa.

If (*your*) head is not torn to pieces, you do not leave off wearing a hat.

N.B.—As long as you live you follow the fashion.—“Out of the fashion, out of the world.”

85.

Ni odidi me ose: ni odidi anadyo, oye baifo.

He who has done eating will say, "He who eats at night is a sorcerer."

N.B.—Meaning, that a person out of all temptation, is apt to judge harshly the failings of his neighbours.

86.

Obi mmua n'ano onnifo.

Nobody shuts (*or shall shut*) his mouth who is innocent.

87.

Dua baakon gye enframa, ebu.

One tree receiving (*all*) the wind, breaks.

N.B.—If the whole force of the wind shaking the forest were directed against one tree, it would overthrow it: collective strength will be triumphant in cases where single resistance would be vain. So the Esopian fable of the old man and the bundle of sticks. There is no people more keenly alive to the advantages of combination than the West African, and it has long served to defend the negro against more highly intellectual races.

88.

Kontromfi se: oberan wu ne koko.

The kontromfi says, "A strong man dies only from his chest being hurt."

N.B.—The "kontromfi," or cynocephalus, is the largest and strongest ape found on the Gold Coast; * in the proverb it repre-

* M. Riis translates "kontromfi" by "chimpanzee;" this, however, appears erroneous. M. Zimmermann says, "a large kind of monkey (Hunds-affe ?)." The latter is more probable, as the dog-faced baboon is a far fiercer and more dangerous animal than the troglodytes, and West Africa is full of stories concerning the attacks of these ferocious

sents a man "calidus juvenis"—in the full enjoyment and consciousness of his strength, who in battle disdains a wound, unless his breast, supposed to be the seat of life, is dangerously hurt.

89.

Kontromfi se, me suman ni m' eni.

The baboon says, "My charm is my eye."

N.B.—West Africans are ever provided with "suman"—"medicines for eye," charms or amulets to defend them from sorcerers, enemies, and dangerous ghosts. The proverb remarks that a brave man will trust for his security to his own strength and vigilance.

90.

Adarre bo bo-a, nankasa na tua.

When a hook beats a stone, itself (*must*) suffer.

N.B.—Compare with the fable of the earthen pot and the iron pot.

91.

Nea oko asu na obo ahinna.

He who fetches water breaks the pot.

N.B.—When the water-pot comes to grief, it is more likely to be broken by the person who went with it for water, not by one who had nothing to do with it at the time.

92.

Voton wo-a, wonto tuo.

If you (*yourself*) are sold, you do not buy a gun.

N.B.—Because one born a freeman is not sold unless he be deeply indebted, and unable either to pay or to prevail upon others to pay for him.

brutes upon women and even villages. As yet, however, we know so little concerning the anthropoid apes of Africa, that "kontromfi," like the Yoruban Nake, may be some new and fierce species resembling the gorilla.

93.

Osukwase anuma nko di Krobo aivu, na vonkyirre Santeni entua ekaw.

When a fowl from Osukwase eats the corn of Krobo, they do not seize a man from Ashante and make him refund the damage.

N.B.—Literally, "An Osukwase bird does not go to eat the Krobo corn, and they do not catch an Ashante man, pays not the debt." Osukwase and Krobo are names of towns. Like No. 54, this means that no one should suffer for the sins of another.

94.

Woko asu amma, vommissa ahinna.

When you go to (*fetch*) water and do not return, they do not enquire about the pot.

N.B.—They ask after you: a trifling loss is not thought of when it is accompanied by a heavy calamity.

95.

Ensu fa Kramo-a, vommissa n'adurade.

When water takes a Moslem (i.e., *when he is drowned*), they do not enquire about his dress.

N.B.—"Kramo" and "Kramofo" are Oji words for a Moslem. The proverb has the same meaning as No. 94.

96.

Wofa abarrima kwanm-a, wo sekan yera.

If you make friends on the road, your knife will be lost.

N.B.—A warning against sudden friendships with strangers, who may prove deceivers and thieves: a neglect of this amongst the Asiatics doubtless fostered, if it did not create, the system known in England as "Thuggee."

97.

Nea n'eni aberre, vommo n'eni su.

He whose eyes are red, they do not beat upon his eyes.

N.B.—Red eyes signify rage, and the meaning is, that to vex one already vexed is “oleum addere camino”—to add fuel to fire. The Oji tongue has originally but three words for simple colours: “Tuntrum,” black; “fufu,” white; and “koko,” red, ruddy, yellowish, or brownish-red. Bru for blue has been borrowed from the English. See also No. 208.

98.

Nea okum Tabirifo na, ofa n'entokota.

(The executioner) who kills Tabirifo, gets his shoes.

N.B.—“Tabirifo” is the proper name of a man of note in Ashante, who was publicly executed. The proverb means, he who does the work should receive the reward.

99.

Nea ovo aka no, osurro sunson.

He whom a serpent has bitten dreads a slow-worm.

N.B.—Sunson is a harmless reptile, believed by West Africans to be blind. The meaning of the proverb is substantially the same as our saying, “The burnt child dreads the fire;” or, “The thief doth fear each bush an officer;” but more strongly expressed, signifying that a person who has been injured will not only dread the identical cause or author of his affliction, but even the mere appearance of it. The Hindi proverb is, “He who is bitten by a snake will start at the sight of a rope; also, “The leaf crackled, and your slave fled.”

100.

Nea vahu bi pen, se voki.

They who have seen a thing once, say they loathe it.

N.B.—Meaning, that you may have too much of a good thing —“ne quid nimis.”

101.

Asafo eni-sa akura.

Troops select farm-houses (viz., *for attack*).

N.B.—“Akura” is a hamlet in a plantation, where the owner keeps his family and his slaves. It is opposed to “kru” (croom) or “man,” the town, which is the common centre of a number of plantation hamlets, scattered over a large extent of country. The English croom used for a Gold Coast village is an ignorant corruption of “kru-mu” or “krum,” “in the village.” The meaning of the proverb is, the point of attack will be where there is the least resistance and the most “loot.”

102.

Wo hu eden-a, wonye ba enu adyuma.

Though strong you will not do the work of two.

N.B.—Meaning, that the strength of Hercules or Goliath has its limits.

103.

Akoko eni so brofua.

A fowl selects a single grain (viz., *from a heap of rubbish*).

N.B.—Meaning, that what is good and profitable must be selected from the trash: the smallest thing useful must not be despised.

104.

Atyo abien borro vu.

Two small antelopes beat a big one.

N.B.—“Tyo” is a small animal: “vu” or “bobiri” a larger species. The adage means, “Union is strength.”

105.

Opanyin due "mante, mante."

A grandee (*or elder*) practises, "I have not heard! I have not heard!"

N.B.—Meaning forbearance. The "empanyin" (*plur.*) are the elders of a town, forming the council of the caboceer or chief, each having his particular charge, as the "safohinne" or military chief, the "fotosanfo" or treasurer, the "kyami" or spy and speaker—king's mouth"—the "bofo," messenger, and others; a system much resembling that of the village republics in Maharatta-land. The meaning of the proverb is, "It does not become the dignified and venerable man to notice every light word and deed."

106.

Nea vode enkokonte se vobedi semmina, wongye n'akingye.

If the eaters of enkokonte say they eat soap, you do not doubt it.

N.B.—"Enkokonte" is a food resembling native soap: sometimes a man eating it, says waggishly, that he is eating soap. If the person addressed took the assertion in good earnest, he would appear a fool. Hence the meaning seems to be, "A joke must be understood as such, not as a serious matter."

107.

Wo ni wo agya akoa tya abe-a, ofre wo ave.

When you cut down a palm-tree with the slave of your father, he will call you friend.

N.B.—If you are intimate with your inferiors, they will lose respect for you. Mr. Riis observes that the saying is akin to, though not so strongly expressed as, the English proverb, "You cannot touch pitch without being defiled." It is almost equivalent to our saying, "Familiarity breeds contempt."

108.

Mogya mpa ten tirri mu da.

Blood is never wanting in the horsefly's head.

N.B.—Because the horsefly's business is to suck blood. The proverb is equivalent to, "A robber's den will never be found empty of stolen goods."

109.

Akura te se nantyu-a, aginamo 'akoa nen.

Though a mouse were (*as big*) as a bullock, yet it would be the slave of the cat.

N.B.—A born slave, however he may rise in the world, will ever retain a servile mind.

110.

Atodru asa, enye vonni Akowua entoam.

When the powder is gone, it is not that in Akowua's powder-case.

N.B.—Meaning, "When they say all the powder is consumed, they do not include the private store of Akowua," one of the Ashante kings: though others may be in want, he is probably supplied.—"Nulla regula sine exceptione."

111.

Osunson se, obenyin ansa na vafi eni; onyini, na ode ne ti pempem.

The blind-worm said he would grow before he got his eyes: he is grown, but (*still*) he wriggles his head about (i.e., *to find his way*).

N.B.—He is still blind. The meaning is, that youth is the time for study, and if this be neglected, old age will rue it.

112.

Otumfo vro ka-a, ovro fa wo meti.

When a strong man pushes your ring, he pushes it to the shoulder.

N.B.—“Ka” is a finger-ring, or, as in this place, a wrist-ring. The meaning of the saying is, that a man’s character impresses itself upon all his actions.

113.

Eni baakon enfye kra, enfye asibe.

One eye does not look (*at the same time*) on a monkey and on a baboon.

N.B.—The “krá” and the “asibe” are different species of the *Simiadae*. The proverb means, “You cannot do two things at the same time.”

114.

Batafo se, enye n'ano, enye n'ano, na n'ano ara nen.

The hog says, “It is not my mouth! it is not my mouth! (*that has ruined the plantation*);” but still it *is* his mouth.

N.B.—The word of a rascal must not be depended upon; one who will commit a crime will also deny it.

115.

Wonim di-a, di bi, na nni 'niara.

If you eat, eat a portion, but do not eat all.

N.B.—“*Sit modus in rebus* : ” in the application of any power, observe moderation.

116.

Eniwa nnim avirreho.**The eye knows nothing of grief.**

N.B.—Meaning, it will close in spite of your sorrow: bodily wants must be satisfied, whatever be the matter with the mind.

117.

Dua ananse adi awu, entekuma entra ase, entonkom.

The entekuma will not sit down nor sleep under the very tree, from eating of which the ananse died.

N.B.—“Entekuma” and “ananse” are two different kinds of arachnida: the latter, as amongst the Ga people, is a mythic personage, generally called “Agya Ananse,” or Father Spider. Great skill and ingenuity are attributed to him, probably from observing the wonders of the web; and the people are rich in “anansisem” or Spider stories. The meaning of the proverb is, “You will do well to avoid a thing, person, or step, which has been fatal to friend or relative.”

118.

Obusmaketew se: entem eye na ogum eye.

The chameleon says, “Speed is good, and slowness is good.”

N.B.—Meaning, each is good in its proper time and place.

119.

Ohienni nya ade-a, oman bo.

When a man becomes rich, the town goes to ruin.

N.B.—The parvenu becomes insolent under prosperity.—“Honores mutant mores.”—“Asperius nihil est humili cum surgit in altum.” The Hindi proverb is, “When he had filled his belly he began to vex the poor.”

120.

Akikire se: obarrima mferr' agwan.

The tortoise says, A man must not be ashamed to run away (i.e., *when flight is necessary*).

N.B.—So the well-known Hudibrastic lines—

“He who fights and runs away,
Shall live to fight another day.”

In the African proverb the words are attributed to the tortoise—the slowest of all animals, and the least likely to profit by flight—in order to *make* them more emphatical.

121.

Pani nim pam-a, anka ne to nna tokru.

If a needle could sew, it would not have a hole on its back.

N.B.—This refers to the censorious, who, if really reformers, would begin by ridding themselves of their own defects.

122.

Wotya wo tekrema so toto vi-a na, wonnya nam.

If you cut off from your tongue and roast and eat it, you have no meat.

N.B.—Meaning, you have gained nothing by this proceeding; you have acquired nothing that you had not before. This saying is pointed at persons who carry on law-suits against members of their own family.

123.

Wode wo ba to Wuawu-a, owu.

If you call your child “Death,” it will die.

N.B.—Because, so to call a child would be as it were a challenge to Death by marking it as his property. Hence, the proverb means, “He who wantonly risks a disaster will be visited with it ere long.”

124.

Odonko nya ade-a, obodam.

When the Donko * becomes rich he runs mad.

N.B.—Similar to No. 119, and representing the beggar on horseback riding to the devil.

125.

Esonno tia afri so-a, enhwan.

When an elephant treads upon a spring-trap, it (*the trap*) does not spring up.

N.B.—But it does when a bird treads upon it. The proverb means, "The same act performed, or word spoken, by different persons, may produce different effects."

* Donko is the name given to the countries and tribes north of Ashanta, about the Upper Volta—the so-called Kong Mountains—and the basin of the Kwara, or Western Niger. Thus it would comprise the mostly Moslem people of Hausa and Bornu, the Fulas and Mandengas, besides the Kafirs of Akyem, Akwamu, and Ayigbe. The land is represented as being well cultivated with wheat and corn, and abounding in elephants, tortoises, horses, asses, and camels; moreover, the Sahara and the European natives dwelling beyond it are known to the people. The Donko slaves are captured by the Ashantes and are sold on the coast, where they are held to be an inferior race, being mostly caught when adult and unable to learn new tongues fluently. They speak, of course, many different dialects, so that "Donko" cannot be used as the name of any particular language. Some describe them as mild and industrious. M. Riis limits Odonko to "a negro tribe in the more interior parts of Western Africa, which furnishes the Oji tribe with most of their slaves; the word is therefore equivalent to servile, with the addition, however, that a Donko is considered also as naturally dull and stupid. By a sudden change of fortune he would be so puffed up with conceit as to have his head turned by the emotion."

126.

Okoto ba nvo anuma.

The crab's daughter does not bear a bird.

N.B.—The offspring follows the parent. Cf. Matth. vii. 16—18, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" The Accra proverb says, "The crab does not beget a bird."

127.

Obi mfa afetrefetre enko Huam.

Nobody carries foreskins to Hua.

N.B.—Hua is a country lying east of the Volta River, and called Ayigbe or Aigbe, by the people themselves, who speak the Ewe dialect. The Huafo as well as the Andanme and the Enkranfo* or Ga tribes, practise keteafo, "cutting short," or circumcision, which may be derived from the Moslems, to judge from the age of the patients. It is performed by persons of a certain class, (not a priest) when the boys are twelve or fourteen years of age. The act does not seem to bear a religious character. Mr. Zimmerman denies the existence of circumcision, *utriusque sexus*, such as prevails throughout Islam—Egypt, for instance. On the other hand, the accurate Bosman ("Description of the Coast of Guinea," Letter 18,) expressly asserts that "some girls are here liable as well as the boys." The rite is held in great disdain by the Ashante and Oji people, who call it *Tyetia*. The above saying, "To carry foreskins to Hua," is equivalent to our "Carrying coals to Newcastle."

128.

Nea otya wo tyetia, enni wo adyom pa.

He who circumcises you will not (*exactly*) make good carpenter's work.

N.B.—Meaning, from skill in one branch of work, you cannot infer the same in another.

* Accra calls itself "Ga," and is known to the Oji people as Enkran. The word also signifies, in Oji, a kind of black ant popularly known as the "driver": thus it is an error to translate Accra—probably a corruption of Enkran—the land of White ants.

129.

Enkyienne nse nehu nse; miye de.

The salt will not say of itself, "I have a pleasant taste."

N.B.—Meaning, that self-praise is no recommendation.

130.

Aben enye de-a na, etua nip'ano.

Though a horn has a bad sound, yet it is applied to a man's mouth.

N.B.—Though one of your family be disagreeable, yet do not break with him.

131.

Magum na kum dom.

Reinforcement beats the foe.

N.B.—"L'union fait la force."

132.

Ehwyunne nya na eniwa nya.

When the nose gets (*a thing*), the eyes get (*it too*).

N.B.—When one of a family becomes rich, the others hope to share in his wealth.

133.

Ekwai 'agye wo, womfre no akwaiwa.

A forest that has sheltered you, you will not call a shrubbery.

N.B.—You will not detract from the merits of a benefactor.

134.

Ohienni bu be-a, ence.

When a poor man makes a proverb it does not spread.

N.B.—On the Gold Coast, and in pagan Africa generally, poverty, as in England, is not a misfortune, but a crime.

135.

Obi naoma bi afiri fye, na anuma nkasa no.

When a person is sent to look at a snare, the bird does not upbraid him.

N.B.—Because the person does not come of his own accord: a slave is not culpable for what he does at his master's command.

136.

Aberriki se: nea abogya bum vo no, eho na adidi vo.

The goat says, "Where much blood is, feasting goes on."

N.B.—A feast is referred to for which eatables are collected: these attract to the spot goats, and the proverb is put into the hircine mouth because the animals are ever wandering about the town seeking fodder. The proverb corresponds with the Scriptural saying, "Whosoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."—Matth. xxiv. 28.

137.

**Nnipa iniara de anka gwarre-a, von hu ye, cwam;
na ahoho se oko da so, na ne hu bon.**

Everybody who washes himself with lemon juice, becomes sweet-scented: therefore the Ahoho said he would go upon (*the lemon tree*) and live there, but still he stinks.

N.B.—These negroes wash themselves from head to foot at least once a day, and after washing rub their bodies with lime-juice to

remove the *bouquet d'Afrique*. The Ahoho is a red ant of peculiarly ill savour, generally found in lime and orange trees. The meaning is, "No remedy will affect innate and inveterate vices." Cf. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?"—Jer. xiii. 23.

138.

Voni yanom-a, vomfre yanom.

If you have no comrades, you do not call for (*your*) comrades.

N.B.—Referring to enterprises which cannot be carried out save by the combined exertions of a number. Thus the meaning would be, "You must not count upon means that are not at your disposal,—cut your coat according to your cloth."

139.

Aboa no n' anom ye no de-a, onvi ne konmda.

Though the beast is dainty-mouthed, it does not eat its collar-bell.

N.B.—This alludes to dogs: though fond of dainties, they do not eat the ornaments fastened round their necks. The meaning seems to be, "Even greediness does not rush blindly upon everything nice and attractive."

140.

Obi ntutu anuma, enko kyerre panyin.

Nobody plucks a bird, which he is going to show to an old man (i.e., *in order to ask its name*).

N.B.—By plucking it he would defeat his own object, as the old man would no longer be able to identify the bird.

141.

Oponko agyimi-a, nea ote no so, ongyimie.

Because a horse is a fool, he who rides it is no fool.

N.B.—Meaning, that the defects or vices of a dependent are not to be attributed to his master.

142.

Vonam ba enu sum afri-a, vonam ba enu na ko fye.

If you lay a snare in company, you go in company to look at it.

N.B.—If any one shares with you in a work, he should share with you in its reward.

143.

Biribi nko ka empopa, enye krada.

If nothing touches the palm-leaves they do not rustle.

N.B.—There is no smoke without fire.

144.

Eki se obekon-a, o ni n' akomfodi.

When Eki says he will not fight (*he means*) himself and his party.

N.B.—Eki is the name of a man, famous probably as a hardy warrior.

145.

Ohienni asomen ni batafose.

The poor man's ivory is a hog's-tooth.

N.B.—A hog's tooth is as valuable to a poor man as an elephant's tooth to a rich man.

146.

Ahine tew empanyin enim-a, enyera.

If a string of pearls breaks in the presence of grown-up people, nothing is lost.

N.B.—The string of pearls is worn by a child: nothing is lost, because those present will gather up the beads; but the child, if alone, would leave and lose them. The proverb means, "That if prudent people are at hand, they will take means to avert the evil consequences of a disaster."

147.

Abca bi do srade-a, osua prako.

When an animal fattens, it learns from the pig.

N.B.—Meaning, that when one is the author and inventor of an art, those who practise it do so in imitation of him, not by their own invention.

148.

Okwan varre-a, vode von nanna tya, enye abonua.

When a way is long you shorten it with your feet, not with a hatchet.

N.B.—There is a pun on this proverb; “*tya*” meaning to cut off as well as to pass over or through. The meaning is, “Your means must be suited to your ends.”

149.

Ano patiruw-a, esen namon.

When the mouth stumbles it is worse than the foot.

N.B.—A wrong word — “*nescit vox missa reverti*”—may be more harmful than a blunder in action.

150.

Mmofra nko tu-a, vanhu tu; empanyin enko tu-a, votiatia so.

When boys were to reap, they did not understand it; when old people were to reap, they trampled about (*the land*).

N.B.—The proverb is applied to the difficulty of settling a quarrel: some want the necessary prudence and experience, whilst others, from whom better things might be expected, side with one party and increase the evil instead of allaying it.

151.

Vose: ko man ko to,—na vonse nse; ko man ko sen.

They say, "Go into a town to settle;" and they do not say, "Go into a town to boast."

N.B.—This is addressed to those who leave their native land, and settle in another: they ought to join the people with whom they live, and not pride themselves upon retaining their own manners and customs, or attempt to set up new rules.

152.

Wokon enkran na nko-a, wontyorre abe ngum.

When you endeavour to drive the "drivers," and they will not give way, you do not peel palm-nuts and throw among them.

N.B.—Enkran, the "driver ant," has been alluded to in No. 127. It is a small black ant, which marches in line, bites severely, attacks houses, destroys all the smaller animals, and has, it is said, overpowered and killed hunters when, torpid with fatigue, they have fallen asleep in the bush. West Africans oppose their progress by fire, and palm-nuts attract them. Hence, the meaning of the proverb is, "When you are anxious to attain an object, you will not do anything that will have the opposite effect: you will not attempt to extinguish a flame by pouring oil upon it."

153.

Nea okem gye, ni me.

What hunger desires is repletion.

N.B.—The meaning is, that every want requires its particular satisfaction.

154.

Okwasia na ne gwan tew empen abien.

(*He is*) a fool whose sheep runs away twice.

N.B.—Because he was not warned by one mishap to secure his property. The meaning is, “He is a fool indeed who cannot learn even from experience.”

155.

Osekanfua na gye nehu abofra ensem.

The blade of a knife resists in the hand of a boy.

N.B.—It resists or defends itself, i.e., it will wound him that sports with it. The meaning is either “Let the inexperienced keep aloof from dangerous things, and not meddle with edged tools,” or “Things useful in themselves may prove perilous to those who ignore their use.”

156.

Wotan wo ni-a, womfa no mma dom

Though you dislike your relation, you will not deliver him to the army (*of the enemy*).

N.B.—Amongst West Africans the dislike to a relative rarely amounts to real hate, prompting hostility and a desire of destruction. This, perhaps, is one of the prerogatives of semi-civilised over a more highly cultivated society.

157.

Dua kontonkye na ma yehu dyomfo.

A crooked stick makes us know (i.e., *betrays*) the carpenter.

N.B.—It shows him to be a bad craftsman: by the quality of the work you judge the skill of the man.

158.

Obi se obefro dunsin-a, ma omforro na; oko so anim asan aba.

When a person says that he will climb up the tree-stump (*whose boughs have been cut off*), let him climb: he will go to the face (i.e., the *top*), and return.

N.B.—Another allusion to the *laissez aller* and *nonchalance* of the West African.

159.

Nea ota wo ommere-a, wo-a wogwan wonse; mabre.

If he who pursues you is not tired, you who are flying will not say, "I am tired."

N.B.—Danger will stimulate a man to the utmost exertion.

160.

Akokonini se: to tamfo enku-a, anka mabon anadyo, na vakummi.

The cock says, "Suppose enemies only (i.e., *if all were my enemies*), I should have crowed in the night, and should have been killed.

N.B.—The crowing of a cock in the middle of the night is considered by West Africans a bad omen, and the animal is forthwith killed. The meaning is, "A general hostile disposition towards a person who has no friends or protectors, will soon find a pretext for effecting his ruin."

161.

Ese ncia na, vofre no gyaw.

When the teeth do not meet (i.e., *touch*), it is called a gap.

N.B.—"Gyaw" is the gap which many people show between the two upper incisors. The meaning of the proverb is obscure.

162.

Okroboni ba ngwan kokotem kwn.

The son of a Krobo man does not run through the corn without cause.

N.B.—Krobo (Croboe) is a town built at the foot of a rocky mountain, with a steep and difficult ascent: it serves for a fortress in time of war, and has preserved the people from a foreign yoke. Hence, to see the son of a Krobo man flying through the corn-fields in the plain, would be an extraordinary event, announcing some great and unexpected distress.

163.

Okro voharre no afa enu.

A canoe is paddled on both sides.

N.B.—Measures taken to effect a purpose, in order to be efficacious must be complete.

164.

Aginamoa wu-a, enkura yem.

When the cat dies, the mice rejoice.

N.B.—The subjects rejoice at the tyrant's death; and, as we say, "When the cat is away, the mice play."

165.

Osucefa vommu.

A half-roof they do not put on (i.e., *you do not put a half-roof upon a house*).

N.B.—A work must not be left half done.

166.

Ti kro nko aginna.

One head does not go to a standing (i. e., *constitute a consultation*).

N.B.—“Aginna” properly means the act of going apart, or, more exactly, of standing apart from the general assembly. By implication, it denotes a committee, a consultation of several persons forming a particular party, who have retired from a greater assembly to converse apart. This would be wholly unnecessary where one person only is concerned. So the Italian, “Tre donne ed un, oca non fanno un mercato.”

167.

Wo eni nkom-a na, wose: minnya daberre.

When you are not sleepy, you say, “I have no sleeping-place.”

N.B.—When you are sleepy, you will be content with any place. The meaning is, “Necessity supersedes fastidiousness.”

168.

Aduan bi-a vonni no, vonnoa.

Food, which you will not eat, you do not boil.

N.B.—You will not work without an object.

169.

Ohoho nsoa funnu ti.

A stranger does not carry the head of a corpse.

N.B.—The chief place will not be given to a stranger.

170.

Omamferenni nnyin kronkron.

A foreign settler does not grow pure (i. e., *never becomes a native*).

171.

Ohia 'ka wo, na woti abete-a, edan fan.

If, when afflicted with poverty, you eat Abete, it turns to herbs.

N.B.—“Abete” is a delicate food prepared from the flour of Indian corn. The meaning is, that poverty embitters every enjoyment.

172.

Obi ngyai esonno ekidi, enko di aserredua eki.

Nobody leaves off pursuing an elephant in order to pursue the aserredua (*a small bird*).

N.B.—You do not relinquish a great object for a trifling one.

173.

Wo ti ben wo, na wonya wo twyerre-a, vode bom hoara.

Though, when going to receive your blows (i.e., *the punishment you have incurred for some offence*), your head aches, yet they strike you in that very place.

N.B.—The meaning seems to be, “Justice is executed without regard to circumstances.”

174.

Fa tom! Fa tom! na eye adeso.

“Lay on! lay on!” makes a load.

N.B.—The repeated addition of small things will make at last a heavy load; many a little makes a mickle.

175.

Anini abien enna bon.

Two males (viz., *beasts of prey*) do not live in one den.

N.B.—A house or a family has but one master.

176.

Obi nso dai enko nea vobekum no.

Having dreamed, nobody will go where they will kill him.

N.B.—When a man dreams that he will be killed at a certain place, he will not go there : warnings must not be despised.

177.

Sikaadyuma biara nye aniwu.

Gold work (i.e., *any work for gold*) is no shame.

N.B.—Rather a shameful saying.

178.

Akuntuma kuntun n' afe, na onkuntun empanyin.

A bully fights with his peers, not with grandees.

179.

Anop' anom bon, na asempa na vom.

In the morning the mouth smells, but there are good words in it.

N.B.—Morning is held the best time for deliberating on matters of consequence.

180.

Anadyoboa nno aonwa.

Night venison (i. e., *game caught at night*) is not fat.

N.B.—Because at such time you cannot judge between the good and the bad. The proverb means, "Things got at random are rarely valuable." It is our buying a pig in a poke.

181.

Sika ye fe, na opegyafo ye na.

Gold is pretty, but the heir is rare.

N.B.—Where there are riches, an heir is often wanting : earthly happiness is never so complete but that it has some drawback.

182.

Wodi soa ensa, fye wo ensa.

When you eat a monkey's hand, look at your (*own*) hand.

N.B.—When you enjoy yourself at the expense of others, remember that you are liable to the same misfortune.

183.

Okwasia na ose: vode me yonku na vonne mi.

A fool says, "My friend is meant, not I."

N.B.—Because he refers a warning, meant for himself, to another man, and neglects to profit by it.

184.

Ohimmone ni bebi, na obofo bonne na vo bebi.

There is nowhere a wicked prince, but there are wicked ambassadors.

N.B.—When, in a transaction between two princes, anything goes wrong, it will be laid to the charge of the ambassadors, however much the fault is in the princes themselves. *Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.*

185.

Nnipa pa bi ko sa, vanhu ano, na gyamakutroku ?

Brave men who went to the war did not see the end
(i.e., *could not bring it to a successful issue*), and a coward ?
(—*what can be expected of him ?*).

186.

Oman tya wo sama, vompopa.

When the town ornaments your hair, they (*your relatives*) will not disorder (*or efface*) it.

N.B.—“Ornament” means, properly, cutting out figures on a person’s head by the hair being removed unequally. “When the town,” &c., i.e., when it is done by a public decree to confer honour on you, your friends will take pride in it.

187.

Asom ni enkwanta.

The ear has not a double way (i. e., *two ways*).

N.B.—You can hear only one thing at a time. The saying is applied when a man is addressed by more than one person at once.

188.

Okwadu se: wammere na wodidi-a, enye di.

The antelope says, “When you eat without being tired, it has no relish.”

N.B.—If a meal is to be really enjoyed, it must be preceded by exertion and fatigue—*cibi condimentum fames est*. The words are attributed to the antelope, because it is always running about.

189.

Anuma de ako ni aba na nyunne berrebu.

By going and coming, a bird weaves its nest.

N.B.—A great work is not completed at once, but by repeated exertion. Rome was not built in a day.

190.

Vonnya awuru-a, vontew no so ham ma.

As long as you have not got the tortoise, you do not cut the string for him.

N.B.—Do not dispose of a thing till you have it in your power.

191.

Woko fa bi atope ko ye adyuma, wococoro so ko to no ho.

When you take another man's hoe to work with, you must wash it, and put it back in its place.

N.B.—A thing borrowed must be carefully restored, and in good condition.

192.

Wokum wodea-a, woto wo yonkude.

When you destroy yours, you join your friends.

N.B.—Meaning, probably, that one who has squandered his own property, will attach himself to his friends, and subsist on their means.

193.

Obi nhu tumm, enti em.

Nobody looks at something black, and steps into it.

N.B.—When you see an impending calamity, which you may avoid, you will not rush into it.

194.

Wo eni rebo-a wonse nse: miki te.

When your eye is going to ruin, you will not say, "I hate ophthalmia."

N.B.—You will not reprove in another person a defect with which you yourself are strongly affected. Our "fellow-feeling," &c.

195.

Onya nya nehu-a, onom nyankuensu.

When a slave becomes a free man, he will drink rain-water.

N.B.—From laziness; because other water must be fetched from a distance. I commend this truly African proverb—showing that the *emancipado* is incapable of moderation in the use of his liberty—to the consideration of all real philanthropists. It is easy to see that if a man will not labour even for his own wants, they do him a service who compel him to work.

196.

Obi amma m' amo-a, mirema mehu amo.

When a person neglects to congratulate me, I congratulate myself.

N.B.—Trifling neglects of respect must not be taken to heart, but passed over in good humour.

197.

Otam abirri-a, woncew yi.

Though your coat is dirty, you do not burn it.

N.B.—When a thing has a defect, you will not destroy, but mend it.

198.

Opitri memenne-a, omemenne ma oura.

When the Pitri absorbs (*the soup*), he does it for his master.

N.B.—The Pitri is a river fish, of which soup is made. In appearance, the quantity of the soup is reduced by being absorbed in the fish; but in reality it is only a transfer, the part that disappears being contained in the soup. The meaning is, "What you spend in improving your property, is not lost, though temporarily your means are diminished by it."

199.

Ohinne nye de-a, fye nea osafohinne rekyere.

When the prince does not please (*you*), see how the general appears.

N.B.—If you cannot agree with one person, go to another.

200.

Obi ntu mere ensie siw so.

Nobody gathering mushrooms replaces them on the ant-hill.

N.B.—Mushrooms most frequently grow on ant-hills, the red-clay structures of the termites, conical heaps 8 to 12 feet high: therefore the first person coming to the place would appropriate them, not thinking that they belonged to anybody.

201.

Obi akwa di Ahimma, vonhimma no kwa.

Though a slave's name be "Flog," yet you do not flog him without cause.

N.B.—Meaning, perhaps, that, however vicious a man be, he may not be punished except for some special act.

202.

Ankonam di atro.**Who travels alone tells lies.**

N.B.—To establish the truth of a statement, two witnesses at least being required. The Persian proverb is, "Jehán dideh bisyár goyad durogh" ("Whoso seeth the world, telleth many a lie"). So our "travellers' tales."

203.

Obi bema wo aduan adi-a na, ode ampesi di wo adanse.

When anybody prepares food for you, he testifies to you by Ampesi (i.e., *he gives you some Ampesi to try it by*).

N.B.—By "Aduan" is meant the common food of the Gold Coast, called Fufu. Yams or plantains are cut to pieces, and boiled, in which prepared state they are termed "Ampesi." They are then pounded in a wooden mortar (*vodru*) till they become a tough, doughy mass (*fufu*). A round lump of this is put into the palm-nut soup (*enkwan*), popularly called "palm-oil-chop," and eaten with it. The meaning of the proverb is, that one who would benefit you, usually gives a foretaste of his kindness; or, more generally, that "coming events cast their shadows before."

204.

Mosia kokwaw entem-a, vode wo kon anwam.

If thou, pebble, hastenest to become smooth, they will fight the anwam with thee.

N.B.—"Anwam" is the name of a large bird that feeds on palm-nuts; and pebbles serve for buckshot when smooth and round. Many men have sufficient strength and talents to be useful, but for some defect or vice which prevents them from turning their powers to advantage.

205.

Obea tenten so' abe-a, onwam di.

When a tall woman carries palm-nuts, the birds will eat them.

N.B.—It is man's work to cultivate the fields, woman's to carry home the produce, which is balanced upon the head. The proverb accounts for why the latter sex is shorter than the former: it is necessary for the station and occupation allotted to it.

206.

Adesa okoko biri.

In the evening (*even*) a red man is black.

N.B.—As in Europeans there is a difference between a blonde and a brunette, so the West Africans distinguish amongst themselves black (*tuntum*) and red (*koko*) negroes, the skin of the former being of jetty hue, that of the latter a ruddy brown. The meaning of the proverb is, that circumstances level inequalities.

207.

Woferre-a, wofon.

When you pine (*under disgrace and contempt*) you fade.

N.B.—Mental uneasiness will break down a man's strength.

208.

Voseoma ba nimadefo, na vonsoma namontenten.

They send an intelligent man (*as messenger*); they do not send a long-step (i.e., *one who is able to walk fast*).

N.B.—As the West Africans ignore writing, a messenger is always the negotiator of the object for which he is sent; hence, in selecting him, mental qualifications are regarded rather than bodily strength.

209.

Apopokiki fi ensuase se odenkyem yarre-a, vongye n' akingye.

If an Apopokiki, from the bottom of the river, says that the crocodile is sick, it will not be doubted.

N.B.—The Apopokiki is a river fish, whose statement will not be discredited because he comes from the very place where the crocodile lives. The meaning is, that the testimony of an eye-witness will be credited.

210.

Wonnim asaw-a na, wose: akyinne nye de.

If you cannot dance, you will say, "The drum is not agreeable."

N.B.—You pretend to despise what you are not able to enjoy : "The grapes are sour."

211.

Aferr' enti na odomanin ti bo akyinne hu.

On account of shame (i. e., *being ashamed to flee*), the war-chief's skull sticks on the drum.

N.B.—The skulls of hostile chiefs and war captains, who are taken prisoners or are killed in battle, are fixed in trophies to the big drum. The proverb points out the dangers of ambition.

212.

Akoa nkyerre nnannua.

A slave does not show the timber.

N.B.—The "timber" here means the forest-trees fit to be used as timber. A slave will not point out where they are, because, when they are found, he will have the trouble of cutting them down, and

of carrying them home. The meaning of the proverb is, that a person will not prosecute an undertaking from which he expects more trouble than profit.

213.

Akoa mpaw ura.

A slave does not choose his master.

214.

Obaakon enye barrima.

A man alone is no hero.

N.B.—One person alone will not effect great things: to accomplish an object, the united efforts of many are required.

215.

Abe berre-a, woso fa miso fa.

When the palm-nuts are ripe, you carry half, I carry half.

N.B.—Each of us must take an equal share of the trouble as well as the produce.

216.

Adi ama ni adi ama na agorro.

Mutual entertainment is (*fair*) play.

N.B.—More literally, "To eat and to give, to eat and to give, (*is*) a play."

217.

Onyansafo na tya akwamio.

An expert man cuts the roots in the road.

N.B.—“Akwamio” are the roots of trees running across the road, and cut away to render it more level. Some superstition attaches to this act, which must be performed according to certain rites, and by a man acquainted with them, otherwise evil would result. The meaning of the proverb is, “A business of importance must be performed by a man of skill and experience.”

218.

Eniwn na tan onipa, na aso de entan onipa.

The eye envies—not the ear.

N.B.—The eye gives the occasion for envy and hate; even a good and affable man is often disliked, his kind words being disregarded, and jealous looks being cast upon his talents or his possessions.

219.

Yepa-na yebehu enti na yekeyirre boa.

To find (*a thing*) when we want it, we make a parcel.

N.B.—Showing the necessity of order and arrangement.

220.

Kontromfi se: voce m' afonnom-a na, meyi asem pa ma ka makyerow.

The baboon says, “If you put something into my mouth (i.e., *give me something to eat*), then I will produce a good word, and tell you.”

N.B.—Probably meaning that good advice deserves a recompense; also, that no man does anything *gratis* for his neighbour.

221.

Dua bevo wo eni no vobu so, na vonsen ano.

When a piece of wood threatens to pierce your eye, they will blunt it, and not point it.

N.B.—You will endeavour to counteract, not to increase, an impending danger.

222.

Onantefo na odi ade, eye de.

What a foot-traveller eats, tastes well.

N.B.—Because he is hungry, and hunger is the best sauce.

223.

Ekru ntutu afa enu.

A wound does not pain at two halves (i. e., *on both sides of the body*).

N.B.—A calamity is felt only in the quarter visited by it.

224.

Wo sika ye wo yaw-a, na wokon-a, wonyi dom.

If your gold pains you, and you fight (i. e., *if in war you grudge your gold*), you will not conquer the enemy.

N.B.—Gold must be spent in gaining friends and confederates. If a great object is to be accomplished, you must put to work all your means and energies.

225.

Owu adarre nnow fa akon.

Death's sickle cuts not in one half only (*but universally*).

N.B.—The "Adarre" is a kind of bill-hook used by West Africans for cutting down the bush. We must Anglicize it by "sickle" or "scythe."

226.

Etua wo yonku hu-a, etua dua.

If another suffers pain, (*to you*) a piece of wood suffers.

N.B.—You are not affected by it: it is as if a piece of wood had the pain. This is a characteristic saying, showing the practical selfishness and feelinglessness of the wild West African, who, when tamed by slavery, becomes one of the most tender of men. Dr. Johnson's favourite dogma was, "Everybody is indifferent to another's pains and pleasures:" but his practice was diametrically opposed to his preaching.

227.

Anka berre ko, enye de.

A lemon that grows in ripening, is not agreeable (*i.e., does not taste well*).

N.B.—A thing must be mature before all its good qualities appear.

228.

Obi nsen fasu okotoku sen.

No one excels a wall in bearing bugs.

N.B.—In coarse work the most stupid may be the best.

229.

Vokura w' a, wo virr' aŋ enkekaw.

When they hold you (i.e., *when you are caught*), you forget to bite.

N.B.—At the critical moment the boaster hangs his head.

230.

Nea vo dom ensem na oyi ma.

What is in his hand, the enemy (*can*) give away.

N.B.—He cannot dispose of what is not in his power.

231.

Obi mfa enkodasem ensisi kontromfi.

Nobody will deceive a baboon by tricks.

N.B.—Because the beast is a master of tricks: you cannot defeat a man on his vantage-ground.

232.

Ese tenten enni ese akotia edidi baakon.

Long teeth and short teeth eat the same food.

N.B.—Though there are different states and conditions amongst men, their ultimate lot is the same.

233.

Aberrewa, w' ano ye den-a, gye wo ban.

Old woman! if your mouth is (*so*) hard (i.e., *if your tongue is so sharp*), make your fence (*yourself*).

N.B.—“Ban” is the fence separating the house-yard from the street: it consists of palm-branches, and often requires repair. Old women, who cannot do that themselves, have it done by the kindness of others. The meaning of the proverb is, “Those who claim the assistance of others, should at least be civil to them.”

234.

Woto pra, wato nam.

If you have found an armadillo, you have found meat.

N.B.—The meat being in the armadillo : so, if you sit by a well, you will not search for water.

235.

Ete vopirre no mmaakon mmaakon.

A head they defend it one by one.

N.B.—Or, less literally, "Each man defends his own head : " every person must take care of his own concerns.

236.

Abofra anhu' gwadi-a na, asia nyera.

If a boy does not understand bartering, he does not (*at least*) lose the gold-weights.

N.B.—When bartering, West Africans use cowries and gold-dust, and, for the latter, scales are carried by traders. "Asia" is one of the gold-weights. A boy (*or slave*) who understands the work, may be a source of gain to his master, but it may also happen that he loses some of the valuables which he carries with him. If he cannot be employed in trading, there is no chance of either gain or loss. The meaning of the proverb seems to be, that everything has its light and its dark side.

237.

Wo na waye akoko den, na dyonso abo no?

You, what have you done to the fowl, that it is affected with strangury ? "

N.B.—Mr. Riis remarks, "The application of this odd proverb is difficult to guess." It is doubtless a wise saying, but somewhat too dark.

238.

Okekyefo ade enkura na di.

The mice eat the miser's goods.

239.

Anuma nifirifo vode emposai na yi no.

A sharp-sighted bird is caught by Emposai.

N.B.—“Emposai” is the withered bark of the plantain-tree, which is spread over to hide the snare. The meaning is, “By stratagem even a cunning man may be caught.”

240.

Hua abete vodi n' abusuam.

Huaabete they eat at home.

N.B.—“Abete” is a delicate food of Indian corn: the best is made by the people of Hua (No. 127), who keep it for home consumption. Thus, the saying means, “You keep the choicest things for your own use and enjoyment.”

241.

Aduanfyem enti na Obronni tu ko Abrokirri.

On account of food-looking-into (i.e., *intrusive curiosity*), white men went off to Europe.

N.B.—The West Africans naturally suppose that man was created in their country, and that at first whites and blacks all dwelt together. The former, however, were so much molested by the negroes, who were ever looking into their food and prying into their actions, that they emigrated from Africa to Europe. The proverb is a warning against over-curiosity, which may annoy others beyond endurance. Some of the converted negroes thus explain the difference of complexion:—Cain was a black man, but when rebuked by the Creator for murder, he turned pale with fear: hence the white colour. This is indeed “tit for tat.”

242.

Obofo mmofra hu nye fe.

A miscreant's fellows are not pretty.

N.B.—Meaning, that people do not like to look upon them : they are unwelcome, and are dreaded wherever they appear.

243.

Wokusa ode bebrebe-a, eprim.

If you roast the yam too much, it will be burnt.

N.B.—*Omne nimium nocet : ne quid nimis.*

244.

Kokoseki mpe fi aba, anka onsisi sumana so.

If the vulture did not wish to come into the town, he would seat himself upon the Sumana-heap.

N.B.—“Sumana” is the huge heap of sweepings found at the end or outskirts of every negro town, and turkey-buzzards often perch upon it. The meaning seems to be, “If you constantly approach a thing, it is a sign that you have some design upon it.”

245.

Obi mfa ade koko, ensisi baifo.

Nobody will deceive a witch by anything red.

N.B.—Because her craft will prevent her being deceived.

246.

Akoa nya nehu-a, ofre nehu Sonneni.

When a slave is emancipated, he will call himself a Sonneni (i.e., a nobleman).

N.B.—Amongst the numerous families with which the Oji-tribe is divided, the Sonna is the highest. When the freedman

calls himself Sonneni (i.e., *one of the Sonna*), the meaning is, that he is so much elated by his new condition, as to lose all power over himself, and to claim the most exalted rank. Our "beggar on horse-back."

247.

Obi dece ko sum-a na, vofre no afanna.

When a (*free*) woman takes service, she is called a slave.

N.B.—Meaning that a person is estimated by what he is, not by what he was.

248.

Obi tan wo-a na, obo w' aboa.

When a person hates you, he will beat your animals.

N.B.—Hate extends to the relations and all belonging to the person hated. Conversely we say, "Love me, love my dog." Qui m'aime, aime mon chien.

249.

Ohantani na ki nipa.

A haughty person hates man.

250.

Ofatyafu, ebeka wo enku.

You, traitor! will be left to yourself.

N.B.—Knowing that you cannot be trusted, nobody will have anything to do with you.

251.

Wo emfefo som asra na wansom bi-a, ete se w' aivuwrow awu.

When your comrades take snuff, and you do not, it looks as if your nails were dead (i.e., *spoiled*).

N.B.—Meaning, you must follow the fashion : by opposing it, you excite suspicions injurious to your character.

252.

Odokonno bodam-a, onenam senm.

When the bread runs round, it dances it in the pot.

N.B.—“Dokonno” is bread of Indian corn, not baked, for that is forbidden by Fetish law, but boiled, according to the usage prevalent in Akwapim. The proverb probably means, “In a state of excitement the staidest person will behave wildly.”

253.

Okwankyen mako se : wobebu mi-a, bu, na meyaw mi.

The roadside pepper-bush (i.e., *pepper-bush by the roadside*) says, “If you will break me, break ; but do not abuse me.”

N.B.—If you are resolved to ruin a man, do it at once, without tormenting him by reproaches : do not add insult to injury.

254.

Asem ba na, abebu ba.

When the occasion comes, the proverb comes.

N.B.—Occasion, i.e., the incidents of life which call forth the proverb, and to which it refers.

255.

Ehia nipa, ma vomfa no nko.

When a man is in distress, let them take him.

N.B.—The distress referred to is capture by enemies, and the proverb means, “The distress of others is no concern of yours; do not trouble yourself about it.” Truly philosophical!

256.

Vodi wo yonku hu asem-a, daaki vodi vode bi.

If sentence is (*now*) passed on your neighbour, another time it will be passed on you.

N.B.—Do not triumph at the distress of others; your time may also come.

257.

Anuma te afirm no, esonno ne kasa enku.

When a bird is in a snare, its cry is peculiar.

N.B.—A man's behaviour in distress will be different from what it is at other times. “Every season has its reason.”

258.

Ade-a nye no na voye n' iye.

You mend (*only*) a thing that is not good.

N.B.—A thing in good order requires no repair.

259.

Wo ba sisi wo kora ba, enye; nanso wo kora ba sisi wo ba, enye.

If your child deceives the child of your sister-wife, it is

not right; and also if the child of your sister-wife deceives your child, it is not right.

N.B.—So the Hindi proverb, "A fellow-wife may be good, but her child is bad." When a man has several wives, they mutually call one another "me kora." The child calls all his father's wives (except his own mother) "little mother." *

260.

Wodi bi ade-a na, woferre no.

If you get presents from any one, you respect him.

261.

Abofra be musu ankron-a, ofa mu anum.

If a boy does nine mischiefs, he shall suffer for it five.

N.B.—And the father of the boy, who should keep his son under proper discipline, shall suffer the rest.

262.

Wotan wo sapo-a, w' anom bon.

If you hate (i.e., if you shun it, so as not to use it) your tooth-brush, your mouth is of ill odour.

N.B.—"Sapo" is a bunch of plantain-tree fibre, the "lif" of Egypt, which West Africans use as sponge and tooth-brush.

* In West Africa the mother is loved far more than the father; the negroes have many proverbs corresponding with the Hindi. "The milk of the sixth day is still sensible," and "A mother's love is best of all."

263.

Wo ni wu-a, wonwu, na offerre-a, wo enso waferre.

When your relation dies, you do not die; but if he is disgraced, you also are disgraced.

N.B.—Disgrace is worse than death: the latter befalls a single person only, whereas the former extends to his whole family.

264.

Teteasoe vonsoe ho bio.

On an obsolete resting-place they rest no more.

N.B.—“Asoe” is a place by the roadside, generally under a tree, where porters put down their loads, and rest awhile: “Teteasoe” is one that has been abandoned. The meaning is, “What is obsolete you will no longer use, but follow the ‘mode’ and do as others do.”

265.

Wo tamfo asem ba, wodi ma no; na oda w' ase-a na, wongye so.

When your enemy is entangled in a quarrel (literally, *when your enemy's lawsuit comes*), assist him to settle it; but when he thanks you, do not reply.

N.B.—The meaning is, “Assist your enemy in his trouble, if you like, but maintain a proud and cold demeanour.” An expression of thanks is courteously replied to by “*ya abraw*,” to equal or inferior; “*ya ura*,” to Europeans; “*ya naado*,” to a wealthy and respected man of his own people; “*ya ahinna*,” to a personage of the chief's family, and so on.

1865 Burton Wolof.pdf

WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA;

OR,

A BOOK OF PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY, IDIOMS,
ENIGMAS, AND LACONISMS.

COMPILED BY

RICHARD F. BURTON



BIBLO and TANNEN
NEW YORK
1 9 6 9

I.

PROVERBS

IN

THE WOLOF TONGUE.

WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA.

PROVERBS IN THE WOLOF TONGUE.

THE subjoined collection of Proverbs is extracted from that excellent work, M. Dard's Grammar.*

The Wolofs, formerly called Jollofs,† are mentioned by many travellers. As early as A.D. 1446 they were known to the Portuguese; and in the reign of King

* *Grammaire Wolofe, ou Méthode pour étudier la langue des noirs qui habitent Les Royaumes de Bourba-Yolof, de Walo, de Damel, de Bour-sine, de Saloume, de Baole, en Sénégambie. Suivi d'un appendice où sont établis les particularités les plus essentielles des principales langues de L'Afrique Septentrionale. Par J. Dard, Instituteur de l'École Wolofe-Française du Sénégal, Auteur des dictionnaires Wolof et Bambara. Imprimé par autorisation du Roi à l'imprimerie royale, 1826.*

It is popularly said in Senegal that no one will ever speak Wolof like M. Dard. The reason is, that, under the new regime of compulsory French instruction, the vernacular language languishes,—loses all its raciness.

† According to the Polyglotta Africana "Jolof" is merely a "Wolof" district.

John, one "Bemoir," of princely house, visited Lisbon in state, was baptised, and did homage to the European king. Their habitat is "Senegambia," the country between the rivers Gambia and the Senegal, the latter separating them from the Assanhaji, who are held to be the Sanhagii of Leo Africanus. They are "black, but comely," with long-oval faces, finely-formed features, straight noses, and jetty glossy skins: in character they are brave and dignified, and they are distinctly not negroes, but negroids.

Their language differs from those around them, and is remarkable for copiousness and picturesqueness. It is widely extended, because Senegambia has long been—like the North African coast—the importation-place of European goods intended for Central Africa, for Timbuktu, Hausa, Bornu, and the upper Nigerian basin. Besides the natives of the maritime countries, the people of Bundu, Kayaga (Galam), Kaarta, Kasson, Fuladu, and Bambara, all affect it. As M. Dard remarks, Mungo Park has often used, in his "African Travels," expressions which he deems Mandenga, but which may be Wolof. For instance, in the story of "poor Nealee," "Kang-tegi!"—"cut her throat;" would be, in Wolof, "Kung akateke!"—"let her head be cut off!" and "Nealee affeeleata," is equally corrupted by the author or printer from Nealee afeyleata, which signifies moreover not "Nealee is lost," but simply "Nealee breathes no more."

In Wolof the Proverbs are numerous and expressive: the people are exceedingly fond of them, and a European with any knowledge of these wise sayings, can travel amongst them not only in safety, but with all respect. I would request the reader to compare these

and the Kanuri proverbs, which are both Moslem, with those of the Kafirs or Infidels in the Oji, the Ga, and the Yoruba languages. M. Dard's orthography is preserved throughout.

1.

Ba nga sainata rone, rone a la diaka saina.

When thou seest the palm-tree, the palm-tree has seen thee.

2.

Jalele sainou ane na sainou guissetil dara, tey mague dieki thy soufe guissa yope.

The child looks everywhere and often sees nought; but the old man, sitting on the ground, sees everything.

3.

Ntiole dou napa thy tate ou morome am omeley.

The diver-bird cannot catch fish behind his companion.

N.B.—Omelé is “to catch an abundance of fish.”

4.

Lou jalele vaja thia saine keurre la ko deguey.

What the child says, he has heard it at home.

N.B.—Distinctly referring to the “enfant terrible” class.

5.

Lou gouy ry ry, guife a di ndeey am.

The great calabash-tree has had a seed for its mother.

6.

Sou batou ou nda diakono thia nsakje dieetil.

If only the small measure goes to the shop, the millet will last long.

7.

Jadhie sou sassoul, dou baw.

If the dog is not at home, he barks not.

8.

Poudhie ou naigue de na jaija ah taw, tey sailo yagoul.

The house-roof fights with the rain, but he who is sheltered ignores it.

9.

Jama sa bope mo guenne kou la ko waja.

Know thyself better than he does who speaks of thee.

10.

Tabaje sou diamanto mbande todhieie (de nga ko todhia).

If you practise your 'prentice-hand upon a large jar, you will break it.

11.

Jamoul aya na, tey ladhietsoul a ko raw.

Not to know is bad, not to wish to know is worse.

12.

Yape dou dieala yape.

Meat eats not meat.

N.B.—Meaning, beggars do not devour one another.

13.

Sou doul kone toubeye diouly aya.

But for the wide trowsers, prayer would be a scandal.

N.B.—Because prostration would be indecent.

14.

Kou amoul ndeey nampa mame am.

He who has no mother sucks his grandmother.

15.

Kou tey jamone ndialbene, moudhie di nofiaye.

If you know the beginning well, the end will not trouble you.

16.

Sopa bour ayoul, wandey bour bou la sopa a ko guenne.

To love the king is not bad, but a king who loves you is better.

17.

Kou tey jamone kou nga bokala bakane, mou di sa ande thy adouna.

Whoso knows one who will die with him, he (*the known*) will be his friend in this world.

18.

Nitte de na anda ak morome am, tey dou masse am.

Man should take as companion one older than himself.

19.

Rafete dhiko mo guenne dhiko dhion bone.

A good action is better than a bad action.

20.

Nitte gou lou nga dинthia mou defa thia lojo am doyoul denkala.

A man who touches what you have shut up, should not dwell with you.

21.

La diarake ama di yonja sou ko niw amone diala.

What the convalescent refuses, would give pleasure to the dead.

22.

Guema na dee, ndigui yaje.

I believe the death, because of the bones.

23.

Diaeeekat ou yaje demmetil dianew.

The born-merchant goes not to the other world.

24.

Bala nga toufou, fetal y beutte.

Before curing ophthalmia, the eyes must be seen.

25.

Sou bounte ou naigue amone y gobar kaine dou guenna.

If the door had daggers, no one would leave the room.

26.

Bula nga onyou naika fa.

Before one replies, one must be present.

27.

Sou doul kone barame lojo di koundou.

Without fingers the hand would be a spoon.

28.

Daw dou mase y taliba.

Running about gives no scholars.

N.B.—Our “Rolling stone gathers no moss.”

29.

Sou ma jathio soufe, dorey fa ma naika.

If I wanted to collect sand, I should begin where I am.

30.

Lou diarake bone bone, mana waka niw.

He who is scarcely convalescent, can stifle a dead man.

31.

Teuradi agoul dianew.

He who always turns when sleeping, does it no more in the other world.

32.

Lou bouki oma oma, mana bare ak bay.

Though the wolf be lean, he can contend with a goat.

33.

Mbajaney dou faikey dee ou borome am.

The cup finds not out its master's death.

N.B.—Because it passes into other hands.

34.

Sou nitte dialey dangogne am di simey thiery,
bou ko niana nieje.

If a man makes soup of his tears, do not ask him for broth.

35.

Jaidhie ou nthiokaire ak sene am kou thia fatte guessi oma.

She whom the partridge loves, as she whom he hates, would starve if they forgot to scratch the ground (*for food*).

36.

Mbote a guenne bengua ndoje, wandey mou tangué bokou thia.

The frog enjoys itself in water, but not in hot water.

37.

Gane you barey bongaloul mbame seuf.

Many guests matter little to the ass of the inn.

38.

Io mana mana bire ou nitte difa na thia lou nga yagoul.

Thou knowest not what man's stomach can contain.

39.

Kou guiro kone maeé la, difa thia ndabe la ngaine boka.

He who takes thy part at the dish to give it to thee, had better allow thee to take it.

40.

Kou lajoul laika laja til diaee.

He who makes not soup for himself, will not make *bouillie* for sale.

41.

Beugueti ma laje, bel sama bope defa bosse.

I want no boiled meat if my head must be the trivet
(*which supports the pot*).

42.

Kou jaiba laje ou ndeki defou gnou ko thy nope am.

When you give a man boiled meat for breakfast, you
do not pour it into his ears.

43.

**Kou teuba ak y sabare danou ak y ngnote, sou nga
laine laikoul, kone itte gnou dhiegna la laine.**

He who jumps upon the corn-bundles falls with the
ears, and if thou dost not eat them thou wilt be the less
charged with eating them.

44.

Dhiguene dhieu oudhie am dee, dara bongalou ko thia.

A woman who has lost her rival has no sorrow.

45.

Bour bou amoul y nitte dou done bour.

A subjectless king is no king.

46.

**Kou di bengua rindi bope am, sou gnou ko beuguey
rindi varroul youja.**

He who wishes to blow out his brains, need not fear
their being blown out by others.

47.

Barey nije, barey thierey ko guenna.

Much soup is better than much broth.

48.

Na gore ayebir, tey bou mou aye lamigne.

Let man be bad if (only) his tongue be good.

49.

Boigne de na ree, wandey derette anga thia souf am.

The teeth may laugh, but the blood is above them.

50.

Wathial jale vou, nejeley maguati ko.

Prevent him not who walks in the fire, for it would be
a great compliment.

51.

Lou berafe feta feta dala thia ande am.

Toasted seeds jump, but they always fall towards their
companions.

52.

**Y gore yope ametil diabar, y dhiguene yope ametil
diakar.**

All men have not wives, and all women are not married.

53.

Daw raw thy ngore la boka.

He who runs away and escapes, is clever.

54.

Daw dhitou dou mae kailifa.

To run the best, does not give the highest rank.

55.

Bala gna fadhiana diaka verle.

Before healing others, heal thyself.

56.

Yonne amoul nkerre.

A road has no shadow.

57.

Ndegam barame ou deye mo aye, guennetey nthiastane.

If the big finger be greedy, the heel is more so.

58.

New na mo guenne dara.

A little is better than nothing.

59.

Faka na la, mo guenne jamou ma la.

"I have forgotten thy name," is better than "I know thee not."

60.

Sou eure nawey, mbote dou fannde.

If the fly flies, the frog goes not supperless to bed.

61.

Fassale sou ittey toгна.

He who separates men that are fighting, should not strike them.

62.

Diana sakete dou ndana.

The hunter who pierces the tree, has not shot well.

63.

Bedhine dou dhiaka saja bope.

Horns grow not before the head.

64.

Gadhia ndoje, sa deunne a thia maiti.

To cleave water hurts the stomach.

65.

Mpetaje ou rabe la.

The pigeon of the animal is there.

N.B.—A Senegambian phrase, used to stop a conversation concerning one absent, when suddenly there appears somebody who is likely to let him know what was said. M. Dard considers this proverb a proof that negroes formerly used carrier pigeons. It may, however, allude to the mythical pigeon that whispered in the Prophet's ear.

66.

Vaidil, so guissey guemal.

Deny, but what thou seest believe !

67.

Mpithie sou bagney daije, souje la niala.

If the bird drinks not at the stream, it knows its own watering place.

68.-

Lou mpithie nana nana, nanetil nane ou gneye.

The bird can drink much, but the elephant drinks more.

69.

**Mpetaje mou naika thy talle, niro oul sabine ak
ma thia kaw garap.**

The voice of the pigeon on the spit is not like the
voice of the pigeon on the tree.

70.

Lou narre barey barey sou dengue diokey diota ko.

Lies, however numerous, will be caught by truth when
it rises up.

71.

**Nthiokaire beugua na seube, wandey dou dhiou
mou andala thy nthine.**

The partridge loves peas, but not those which go into
the pot with it.

72.

**Garap gou nga romba mou sanni la y mbourou sou
thia euluek so, nga romba fa.**

If the tree under which you pass throw bread to you,
you will pass it again to-morrow.

73.

**Nejala kou la Fassale, nejala kou la dana a ko
guenne.**

To flatter one who separates us is good, but it is
better to flatter one who strikes us.

74.

**Ama na kou la ni ma yenna la, tey sa ndabe la
beugua saita.**

There are people who place a basket on your head to
see what you carry.

75.

Boigne a di sakete ou guemigne.

Teeth serve as a fence to the mouth.

76.

Jadhie bou guenna amoul borome.

The dog that has left the house has no master.

77.

Maitite ou jole sou naikone thy tanke gnou soja ko.

If the stomach-ache were in the foot, one would go lame.

78.

Lu nga niaka niaka njel, jama ni diabar ou baye ndeey la.

Though thou hast no mother-wit, thou knowest that the father's wife is mother.

79.

Sou bidow done mbourou, barey kou fanana bity.

If the stars were loaves, many people would sleep out.

80.

Assamana modi bour y mbare.

The sky is the king of sheds.

81.

Goudi modi bour ou nkerre.

Night is the queen of shades.

82.

Soufe modi bour y lal.

Earth is the queen of beda.

83.

Diante modi bour y nitou.

The sun is the king of torches.

84.

**Mpethie ou sagor lou nga thia gawantou kone
yoboul gonbe.**

If you go to the sparrows' ball, take ears of corn for them.

85.

Bala nga dhitou diote.

Before preceding, one must reach.

86.

Kou di dicee kou ko wata defa, amoul kou ko bota.

He who cries to have himself dragged, has no one to carry him.

87.

Ntortor ou garap gope dou defa dome.

All the flowers of a tree do not produce fruit.

88.

Kou mana faiya dou jarou thy ndoje.

He who knows swimming, dies not in the water.

89.

Sou sipou ngabo guennetey pate.

If he who buys milk is proud, he who sells it should be prouder.

90.

Naije lamigne thy ndiaee, demma fou sorey a ko guenna.

To vaunt one's goods is good, but it is better to go where they are bought.

91.

Bate ou dengue yomba na jama.

The voice of truth is easily known.

92.

Samme bagna na naija baramé.

A shepherd strikes not his sheep.

93.

Gneye vou doja ndiolore mo lou ndine am sakou.

If the elephant were to walk about at mid-day, everybody would call him.

94.

Jaije diama ane na euleuk, tey niaka-soutoura taje ko di teye.

He will fight to-morrow ; but if there is a dispute, it is to-day.

95.

Yebou thia nangou thia, kou la thia yoni nga gaw thia demma.

We go quickly where we are sent, when we take interest in the journey.

96.

Sajadi, laikadi, veradi, tole bou mou ama dougoup dou thia ama.

Not to bud, not to eat, not to be cured, give no grain in one's field.

97.

Ke dialou youja, jama na lou jaiwe.

He who weeps from the morning, knows what makes him weep.

98.

Bala nga rera dioka.

Before losing the road, one must rise up.

99.

Demmal mo guenne do demma.

"Go!" is better than "Don't go!"

100.

Kou la ni mael sa alale, sa nguarama la beugua.

He who tells you to give away your property, deserves your thanks.

101.

Voe ou bire diafe na degua.

The song of the stomach is hard to hear.

102.

Satou kou ko logua yabi damme.

If you fill your mouth with a razor, you will spit blood.

103.

Satou dou wata bope am.

A razor cannot shave itself.

104.

Yalla dekala yomba na ko.

To resuscitate, is easy to Allah.

105.

Yague bai onl dara.

Time destroys all things.

106.

Mougne a guenne.

Patience is good.

107.

Jama a guenne.

Knowledge is good.

108.

Fora neuba dou jelo diebaley.

One returns not what one hides after finding it.

109.

Mana a guenne.

Power is good.

110.

Waje y magne doyoul vaidi.

Thou shalt not contradict an elder's words.

111.

Ri bire ama lou nga laika baje na thia.

To have plenty to eat, is good for the big belly.

112.

Jalele bagna na lo mou tamma.

The child hates him who gives it all it wants.

113.

Sou gnou la ittey thy berab, bainaine yone do fa demma.

If they smite thee in a place, thou wilt go there no more.

114.

Koumpa diapa na nitte thy diombasse ou kani.

Curiosity often leads men into bitterness.

115.

Sou mbajaney done nana yore, kaine dou ko solla.

If the hat drank the brain, nobody would wear it.

116.

Garap lo thia gadhia mou sajati.

The split tree still grows.

117.

Seupadiallegne dou dindi joujane.

To make a summersault, will not remove a rupture.

118.

Yalla sou done defa sago bagney, defa sago sopey.

If Allah gives reason to hate, he also gives reason to love.

119.

Lou saja y doungue naw guenaou bandioli.

Everything that has feathers flies, except the ostrich.

120.

Kou dhionkana yomba na danela.

What lowers itself, is ready to fall.

121.

Kewale gua thia guethie, dana manou ko diama.

The hind in the sea fears not the hunter.

122.

Sou noppe done rathia laje, guou woa mbame.

If ears could stir boiled meat, one would call the pig.

123.

Kou amoul y noppe dou degua.

He who has no ears, hears not.

124.

Lanthie tati la, nga mbare deugua.

If you have nothing to eat, you will not seek lodgings.

125.

Kou sango deurre na vatou diegui safara

He who covers himself with cotton, should not approach the fire.

126.

Dome lou mou faika thy vene ou ndeey am la nampa.

The infant sucks only what it finds in its mother's breasts.

127.

Kou amoul mboube sa bire faigna.

He who has no shirt, shows his stomach.

128.

Kou ama dhiour diaee laine.

He who has goods can sell them.

129.

Bala nga togua ama rande.

Before cooking, one must have provisions.

130.

Boreey leufe a la reelo.

One laughs not without cause.

131.

Bala nga sannu dira.

Before shooting, one must aim.

132.

Sou nga amey fasse varra ko.

If you have a horse, mount it.

133.

Lou gname barey barey, moudhie dieja.

Although you have many provisions, you will see the end of them.

134.

Kou la diaka dhioudou eupe la y sagar.

He who is born the first, has the most of ragged clothes.

N.B.—Because the younger children—in Africa—get the best.

135.

Kou diakey vajetane dou ko moudhie.

He who begins a conversation, sees not the end.

136.

Gnou ma done waja baye, dhiourou ma laine.

I have not begotten all that call me sire.

137.

Kou solla yerey you diafe, leguy anga solla sagar.

He who wears too fine clothes, shall go about in rags.

138.

Kou vorra kou la doul vorra, Yalla vorra la.

He who betrays one that betrays him not, Allah shall betray him.

139.

Navete bo dika di taw y jale bou ko gnome.

If live coals fell in the bad weather, no one would go out.

140.

Kou nga ni vaukal ma, dou la vaukal fou la naija.

He who says "Scratch me!" shall not be scratched where he wishes.

141.

Lou dogua danou guenaou jale.

All that one cuts falls to the ground, except the melon.

142.

Manou gnou ama dara tey sonou gnou thia.

No good without truth.

N.B.—Nul bien sans peine.

143.

Ella waja bou ntoute, tey deguelou bou barey.

One must talk little, and listen much.

N.B.—Talk is silver, silence is gold.

144.

Lou dongua thy benne noppe guenna thia baley.

What goes in at one ear goes out by the other.

145.

Y waje you baje, dou mae lou gno laika.

The best words give no food.

N.B.—Fine words butter no parsnips.

146.

Kou naike ndaje bope am, tey Yalla ndaje gnop.

Each for himself, and Allah for all.

147.

Niare y beutte de nagnou guenna gnissa asse benne

Two eyes see better than one.

148.

Ama na y bentte you guenna ry asse guemigne am.

His eyes are larger than his mouth.

N.B.—A popular proverb in Asia as well as in Africa.

149.

Kou naike sopa na niro am.

Everybody likes those like him.

150.

Guenne galle dou yeba morome am.

One boat does not load another.

151.

Dou gnou tekjale niare y nague you mbakante.

One cannot part two fighting bulls.

152.

Dou gnou laikelo nitte sou sourey.

One should not press a full man to eat.

153.

Kaine dou waja lou mou jamoul.

No one should say that which he knows not.

154.

Kou bengua jalissee ligueya.

He who loves money must labour.

155.

Koudi di binda nopalikon.

He who writes, rests himself.

156.

Lekatte sou done nitte kou thia defa gname mou youja.

If the plate were a man, the soup put into it would make him weep.

157.

Guethie kou ko joussa toya.

He who crosses the sea, is wet.

158.

Niare gnou gouda sikime, dou gnou fonante.

Those that have long chins cannot kiss one another.

159.

Demma fo yonne amoul monguenne dieki lojo nene.

To go where there is no road, is better than to remain without doing anything.

160.

Sou la la nague dey dakja nga teuda.

If the bull would throw thee, lie down.

161.

Faleou ma nthine lou bajoul.

I listen not to the caldron which boils not.

162.

Faleou ma barame bou amoul ve.

I listen not to the finger that has no nail.

163.

Leufe lou la Yalla tegua kaine manou ko dindi.

The thing which Allah has placed, cannot be displaced by any one.

164.

Kou manoul dara, dou defa dara.

He who can do nothing, does nothing.

165.

Kou guenne di bour thy adouna, mo guenne di diame thia lajira.

The more powerful one is in this world, the more servile one will be in the next.

166.

Diaka lae dou taje nga aiya.

The first who speaks of lawsuit is not always right.

167.

Kou sa bagne dee do ko dioee.

He who loses his enemy, weeps not for him.

168.

Lou nga sopa sopa dome ou diambour, sa dome guennala la ko.

If you love the children of others, you will love your own even better.

169.

Ope dhiou maiti dou taja dee.

A severe malady does not always kill.

170.

Sou nga dialou lai lala la.

If you rise too early, the dew will wet you.

171.

Kaine dou dogua la ou dhiane.

No one cuts the serpent's net.

172.

Kou dagna dhiane, dou la ni wathia ko.

If you trample on the serpent, no one will say to you,
"Don't!"

173.

Da rama, di sathia sou magney dila guette.

If the child robs when he begins to walk, he will plunder a sheepfold when he grows older.

174.

Darra diante dou ko taire finka.

To place oneself before the sun, does not prevent its continuing its path.

175.

Soula nkerre dou ko taire tora.

To cover the shade of sand, does not prevent its flying.

176.

Dara dou doe nitte, jana lou mou amoul.

Nothing can suffice a man except that which he has not.

177.

Kou di jassaba yonne amoul serre.

He who amuses himself in ell-ing the road, has no stuff to measure.

178.

Daigue dou bour, wandey kou ko beugua joussa soumi sa y dalle.

The rivulet is not a king, yet he who would cross it removes his shoes.

179.

Venne fepe ou dougoup dou diara salou.

A grain of millet is not worth a calf.

180.

Kou Yalla mae mou ama.

He to whom Allah gives, has.

181.

Lou mpithie naw, naw dala thi soufe.

The bird flies, but always returns to earth.

182.

Kou dajka jadhie bel thia saine keurre nga bai ko.

He who hunts a dog home, then leaves it.

183.

Gneye manoul thy dakjar dara, jana gassam-gassama bai.

An elephant can do nothing to a tamarind-tree, except it be to shake it.

184.

Nthine dou ama kavare ndigui safara.

The caldron has no hair by reason of the fire.

185.

Kou Yalla sanni faite do ko mana fakou.

He at whom Allah has discharged a shaft, cannot avoid it.

186.

Fou dhianaje yabey woundou, nkane a fa diaguey.

When the mouse laughs at the cat, there is a hole.

187.

Sou gna douguey thy naigue youja, guenna youja do jama niata laa a thia naika.

If you weep on entering a house, and also on leaving it, you will never know how many beams it has.

188.

Kedo yope dou gnou bour.

All soldiers are not kings.

189.

Guene ou golaje gouda na, wandey lou nga thia lala borome yegua.

The monkey's tail is long, and yet if you touch it, its owner feels (*the touch*).

190.

Samme sagna na mae mew, wandey sagnoul mae salou.

The shepherd can give sweet milk, but he cannot give a calf.

191.

Sagore beugua na dongoup, wandey dou baya.

The sparrow loves millet, but he labours not.

192.

Barey dongoup faikey dewanne a ko guenna.

Much millet is good, but it is better to find next year.

193.

Vata a guenne vaifa.

Shaving is better than plucking the hair.

194.

Guisa de na taja jama.

Seeing excites to knowing.

195.

Dono gueramoul kaine gaw dee a ko mae.

The heir thanks nobody but the sudden death.

196.

Dhiguene doyoul volou, ndigui lou mou la waja, waja ko sa morome.

Trust not a woman: she will tell thee what she has just told her companion.

197.

Kou beugua laime, gnomel yambe.

If you like honey, fear not the bees.

198.

Bala nga laika oubil sa guemigne.

Before eating, open thy mouth.

199.

Fou nague naika bouki dee fa.

Where are the cattle, there the wolf shall die.

200.

Tendal doyoul digala niw.

You do not tell a corpse to go to bed.

201.

Kou yakey lojo bai koundou dou ko niarel a.

He who puts aside his spoon to draw from the pot with his hand, does not do so twice.

202.

Gnou yamoul y lorre, dou gnou makjando sounougufe.

Those whose saliva is not equal, should not chew flour
(*grain ?*) together.

203.

Daigue ou pote y jame am dou ko nana.

They who know the unwholesome well, drink not from its water.

204.

Ama sauo de na apela barey, wandey dou apela weje.
One may have much milk, but it is never too white.

205.

**Mbajaney mo natta thy sa bope they diekou thia
bou ko natta thy sa bope ou naweley.**

If the hat which you try on fits not your head, do not
make your neighbour try it.

206.

Mere mandingne, doja bou gaw a ko guenne.
It is better to walk than to grow angry with the road.

207.

Fatfatlou dou fassale mbame seuf ak y nope am.
Shaking the head separates not the ears from the ass.

208.

Seupadiallegna dou la fassale ak y teigne.
A summersault does not separate the head from the
lice.

209.

Lakaye ou Yalla, jananjou dou ko dindi.
Rolling in the sand will not loosen the knot which
Allah has tied.

210.

Fou sikime diama saino ko fa yobou.
Where the chin goes, the eyes carry it.

211.

Kou dengua watite ou dhiane borome anga fa faikoul.

One walks on the serpent's tracks when it is no longer there.

212.

Lou nga telle telle dioka, yonne dhitou la.

He who rises early finds the way short.

213.

Kou di nana ngueloo son diothey thy sauo dila:

He who lives upon air has no milk.

214.

Nthiokaire lo naw di gassa son daley doupi dhiandhie.

If the partridge that scratches when flying should alight at the grange, it will throw the grain about on all sides.

215.

Son nga faikey gnou di joulo, son nga thia farey, wajetey deugue gua.

If you meet with those who quarrel, you may take one side, but at least speak the truth.

216.

Garap gou la souttoul dou la mase nkerre.

The tree which is not taller than thou art, cannot shade thee.

217.

Bentte dou yenou, wandey lou bope atana jama na ko.

The eye is not loaded, but it knows all that the head carries.

218.

So nioul tota, niou la bow, niti le dhiangne do ama ligueye.

If you remain not at home, if you enter not, if you appear not, you will find no work.

219.

Sissey die rafete ou ndougue a ko guenne.

It is better to carry to market good merchandise than to be stingy of it.

220.

Boka ndeey dou taja mane.

The children of the same mother do not always agree.

221.

Yalla dou rayala nitte y bagne am.

Allah does not destroy the men whom one hates.

222.

Kou la soutta nga ni ko ndiole mi.

To him who is larger than thou art, say "I am a dwarf."

N.B.—Meaning, call great, only him who is more powerful than thyself.

223.

Lamba dadioul dara mo guenna noe diou.

To catch and hold nothing, is more tender than butter.

N.B.—This imitates our saying about “many a slip,” &c.

224.

So dey diemma ngnampata dialame mbole nga amoul.

He who tries to bite the iron, is without corn-ears to eat.

N.B.—Dialame is a little iron cylinder serving to separate the seed from the cotton.

225.

Kou la ni, nga ni ko, joulo niaw gaw.

If you speak to him who speaks to you, a dispute will soon start up.

226.

Kou bota bouki jadhie baw la.

He who swaddles the wolf, will be barked at by the dog.

1865 Burton Yoruba.pdf

WIT AND WISDOM

FROM

WEST AFRICA;

OR,

A BOOK OF PROVERBIAL PHILOSOPHY, IDIOMS,
ENIGMAS, AND LACONISMS.

COMPILED BY

RICHARD F. BURTON



BIBLO and TANNEN
NEW YORK
1 9 6 9

V.

PROVERBS

IN

THE YORUBA LANGUAGE.

PROVERBS IN THE YORUBA LANGUAGE.

THE Yoruba, popularly called the "Aku" language, is spoken by at least two millions of souls, inhabiting a country whose area is not less than 50,000 square miles. This area is bounded on the north by the tribes speaking Barba or Borghu, by the Takpas* (Tappas) of Nufe, and by the other races accolent to the Kwara (Quorra) River: to the south is the Atlantic washing the Bight of Benin; eastward are the various tongues of the Niger Proper, especially the Ibo (Eboe); and westward lies the Gold Coast family of languages.

The Yorubas—though, like all other pure Africans, they have not attempted literature or science—speak a tongue tolerably rich in abstract terms, showing that they are not deficient in a certain power of thought. It is asserted by missionaries that of late they have "begun to feel the aspirations of intellect." Having no ballads, no songs, and but few popular stories, their language abounds in "Owe," or proverbs, which are at once the ethics and the poetics of the people. Many of

* The Takpa or Nufe people are considered the swiftest of men; hence the Yorubas say, *A'sa ni Takpa eiye*, "The falcon is the Takpa of birds."

them are sententious observations on the nature of things; others are designed to inculcate the relative duties of men; and a few are simply riddles, or an ingenious play upon words, called Alo.* The following 124 specimens are extracted from the work of the Rev. Mr. Bowen †:—

1.

Ete i mo ete ni iko oran ba ereke.

Mouth not keeping to mouth, and lip not keeping to lip, bring trouble to the jaws.

N.B.—Talk is silver, silence is gold.

2.

Amoran mo owe, i ladza (or ni ilaju) oran.

A wise man (*or councillor*), who knows proverbs, (*soon*) reconciles difficulties.

* Hence “Apalo” is a riddle maker or enigmatist: Apalo patita, “he who makes a trade of telling riddles,” reminding us of certain civilized diners out, who keep a “riddle book.” There is another form of language, called “Ena,” which somewhat corresponds with our “costermongers’ slang,” or “thieves’ Latin.” It is an “inversion of the order of letters, syllables, words, or sentences, under which the sense is concealed or changed: occasionally employed by those who wish to communicate privately, and to disguise the sense from the bystanders; e. g., De mi, babba, ‘cover me, father,’ employed to signify, Babba mi de, ‘My father is come.’”

† Grammar and Dictionary of the Yoruba Language, by the Rev. T. J. Bowen, Missionary of the Southern Baptist Convention. Accepted for publication by the Smithsonian Institution, May 1858.

I have not changed the author’s orthography, necessarily omitting the diacritical points and tone-marks.

3.

Nikpa ise owo ti wah.

By labour comes wealth.

N.B.—“*Labòr improbus omnia vincit.*”

4.

**Eni aba ko to bi eni ore: eni aba ko se ika, rirun
ni i run womwom.**

A grass mat does not last like a bulrush mat: a grass
mat will not bend; it breaks to pieces.

5.

Abaiyedze ko se ifi idi oran han.

It will not do to reveal one's secrets to a tattler.

N.B.—A common sentiment.

6.

**Aba (*abba*) ko se ikan mo ni li ese, bikose eni ti
nse buburu.**

The stocks are not fastened on the foot of one, except
of him who does evil.

N.B.—The African aba (*abba*), or stocks, called in Zanzibar
“*Mukantala*,” are formed by a large iron staple containing the
ankle, and with ends driven into a heavy log. Mr. Crowther's
translation is, “The stocks are not pleasant, but they are good for a
rogue.”

7.

Abata takete, bienikpe ko ba ode tan.

The marsh (*or pool*) stands aloof, as if it were not akin to the stream.

N.B.—Said of people who are proud and reserved, or who pretend to be what they are not.

8.

Bi odzumo mo, olowo gbe owo, iranwu a gbe, keke, adzagun a gbe akpata, iwonso a be'e gbe asa, agbe a dzi ti on ti aruko, omo-ode a dzi ti akpo ti oron.

When the day dawns the trader betakes himself to his trade;

The spinner takes her distaff (*or spindle*), the warrior takes his shield;

The weaver bends over his Asa, or sley (*i.e., stoops to his batten*);

The farmer awakes, he and his hoe-handle;

The hunter awakes with his quiver and bow.

N.B.—This has been noted by both Messrs. Vidal and Bowen as a correct and picturesque description of the daybreak scene in every Yoruban town. It also means to inculcate that no one should remain idle.

9.

Ebi ko kpa Imale, o li on ki idze aya.

When the Imale (*Yoruban proselyte to El Islam*) is not hungry, he says, "I never eat monkey-flesh."

N.B.—Meaning, that when he is hungry he is not so scrupulous about a food ceremonially forbidden.

10.

A ki iru eran erin li ori ki a ma fi ese tan ire ni ile.

One never carries elephant's flesh on his head that he may dig in the ground with his foot for crickets.

N.B.—One who has plenty of elephant's flesh, in Yoruba considered good food, does not put it on his head and go about searching for crickets, poor man's diet, to eat. This proverb is applied to the "richard" who stoops to mean actions for the sake of saving.

11.

Kpikpe ni yi o kpe, eke ko mu ara.

A long time may pass before one is caught in a lie (lit., *a lie will not go to oblivion*).

N.B.—But detection comes at last.

12.

Amu ni se esin; ete ti imu ni li agogo imo.

The slanderer brings disgrace on one, like a leprosy which attacks one on the point of the nose (*where all can see it*).

N.B.—Said of one who tells another's faults in public.

13.

Abanise mah ba ni se mo.

He is a helper that helps no more.

N.B.—Meaning, that he is a person no longer to be depended upon.

14.

Akuko gagara ni idadzo fu ni li arin ogandzo.

A large cock * decides for us in the midst of the night
(*as to the time of night*).

N.B.—Persons are supposed to be disputing about the time of night, when the crowing of the cock shows that it is very late: the proverb may be quoted whenever a dispute is suddenly decided by unexpected evidence.

15.

Akobi ni ti eleran.

The first-born is the shepherd's.

N.B.—When a woman takes a she goat or a ewe—both of which are termed “Eran”—to feed, she claims from the owner the first-born kid or lamb. Curious to say, Mr. Crowther translates this “the first-born is due to the owner” (*not to the shepherd who takes care of it*).

* Literally, a cock of largeness—so “Ohun didara,” a thing of goodness, *i.e.*, a good thing; “igi ulanla,” tree of bigness, *i.e.*, a big tree; and many other instances. The reader may thus judge of the justice of Mr. Cooley's remarks—“‘Mountain of whiteness’ for ‘white mountain’ is a piece of affectation, of which we believe the honest African incapable.” (“Inner Africa Laid Open,” p. 107.) Had Mr. Cooley learned a little more of the Africans and their languages, he would have

16.

Ibaluwe gbe ile, se bi akuro.

Although the bath-room (*or scullery*) is in the house, it is as wet as a garden by the water side.

17.

Ologbon ogbon li a ro idzanu; okokan li a mo iwa enia; a ba mo iwa enia, a ba bun o, ko fe; a don ni bi abadzo.

On various plans (*bridle-*) bits are made; one by one we learn the characters of men: the character of a man being known (*to be bad*), if it were given thee as a present, thou wouldst not desire it; it is painful to one as a calamity.

18.

Ti idzo ti ayo ni ise idin, wuye wuye ni ise igongo: a ndzo, a nyo: omo banabana nre oko igi.

With dancing and joy moves the maggot; wriggling about to and fro (*with pleasure*) moves the worm: they dance, they rejoice; but the child of the Banabana is going to the wood farm (*or toils on at its wood cutting*).

N.B.—The Banabana is an insect that carries a bit of wood in its mouth, and this is an emblem of the poor, who must fetch fuel from the farms. The proverb will thus mean, "others may amuse themselves, but the poor man has no holiday."

found that in many of the dialects the almost entire absence of adjectives necessitates a phraseology so distasteful to him. In the Isubu, for instance, the only way to express a rich man is "motu a bori"—a man of riches; a good man becomes "motu a bwam"—a man of goodness; and so on.

19.

A ki iwa alaso ala ni iso elekpo.

We do not look for a man clad in white cloth in the quarters of the palm-oil maker.

N.B.—We should not expect any result from incongruous or inadequate means.

20.

Okete ni, odzo gbogbo li o mo; on ko mo odzo miran.

The rat says he knows every day; but he does not know another day (*so as to lay up something for it*). Mr. Crowther renders it—"The Okete says, 'I understand (*what you mean by*) a specified day, (*but, the indefinite expression*) another day I do not understand.' "

N.B.—Said of the spendthrift and the improvident.

21.

Cdzu kokoro baba okandzua.

Covetousness is the father of unsatisfied desires.

22.

Ologbo babu arokin.

The ologbo is the father of traditionists.

N.B.—"Ologbo" is the title of one of the king's privy counsellors, who also acts the part of chronicler or narrator of ancient traditions.

23.

Alagbara (or agbara) mah mo ero baba ole.

A strong man who is destitute of forethought is the father of laziness. Mr. Crowther translates, "A strong man who is a spendthrift (*may be called*) the father of idleness."

24.

Eni ti ko gbo ti ega, a li ega nkpatoto enu.

One who does not understand the yellow palm-bird says the yellow palm-bird is noisy (i.e., *a mere chatterer: but the birds are supposed to understand one another*).

N.B.—This proverb means that men are prone to despise what they do not understand.

25.

Eleda eda li Olorun da ni.

The Lord of Heaven has created us with different natures.

N.B.—We must not expect to find the same qualities in all men.

26.

Bi alagbara dze o ni iya, ki ofi erin si i.

If a great (*or powerful*) man should wrong you, smile upon him.

N.B.—Because resistance would bring upon you a still greater misfortune.

27.

Alakpata ko mo iru eran.

The butcher has no regard for the breed of the beast
(*which he kills*).

N.B.—He attends to his own business, and does not meddle
with matters which do not concern him.

28.

**Igbo biribiri, okunkun biribiri ; okunkun ni yi o
sete igbo.**

The forest is (*very*) dark, and the night is (*very*) dark :
the darkness of the night will soon conquer (*or is deeper
than*) that of the forest.

29.

**Bi ko se obon enia, tani iba dzi li ouro ki o mah bo
odzu re mo sasa.**

Except a sloven, who is wont to rise in the morning
without washing his face nicely?

30.

Emu bale agbede.

The tongs are at the head of (*or governor in*) the
blacksmith's shop.

N.B.—Because they control the hot iron, which without them
would be unmanageable.

31.

Oso onibudze ko kpe isan, oso oninabi ko dzu odun loh.

The osho or tattoo-painting of the Buje-woman lasts not nine days; the tattooing of the Inabi-woman lasts not a year.

N.B.—Osho means the deep black stripes with which professional women ornament the arms and faces of maidens. Buje is the fruit of a small tree of the same name, and when green it makes a pretty stain on the skin. According to Mr. Bowen there is a fable of a beautiful jet-black girl who refused in marriage all the great men of the country; at last a worthless fellow enticed her into his house, and detained her all night. She escaped uninjured, but the community thought otherwise, and she fled to the woods, where the violence of her grief metamorphosed her into the bush that still bears her name—Buje. The Inabi is a plant whose acrid root blisters and burns in a durable dark mark, and therefore rarely used in tattooing. The moral of the saying is that no advantage or possession is permanent.

32.

Bi adza ba li, eni lehin, a kpa obo.

If a dog has a man to back him he will kill a baboon.

N.B.—Showing the advantage of sustaining and encouraging people in their efforts.

33.

Adza ti ko li eti ko se idegbe.

A heedless dog will not do for the chase.

N.B.—If a person will not take advice, no one will employ or trust him.

34.

Gagalo subu, owo te akpako.

If a man let fall his Gagalo (*stilts, made from the midrib of the akpako, wine-palm, or R. vinifera*) a hand will be stretched out to seize them.

N.B.—That is, so soon as one man loses office or position another is ready to take his place. Mr. Crowther says it is applied to any aspirant who monopolises for awhile some desired object, which, on his overthrow, falls into the hand of some one else. So we say, "Pride will have a fall."

35.

A ki da owo le ohun ti a ko le igbe.

We should not undertake a thing which we cannot lift (i.e., *perform*).

36.

Onile ndze eso gbingbindo; aledzo ni ki a se on li owo kan ewa.

(*Though*) the host may be living on wild beans, the guest expects a handful of boiled corn.

N.B.—Mr. Crowther translates "Gbingbindo" by a "tree, found near the water, whose fruit is eaten only in time of famine," and says that the proverb applies to those who are unreasonable in their demands.

37.

Mah gbiyele ogun; ti cwo eni ni ito ni.

Trust not to an inheritance; the produce of one's hands is sufficient for one (*or what one gains by industry is sufficient*).

N.B.—Said to those who neglect industry because they expect to inherit property.

38.

Akoseba, eye ti idze odun.

He who waits for chance may wait a year.

N.B.—Said to those who are ever looking for “something to turn up.”

39.

Eni ti o ran ni ni ise li a iberu; a ki iberu eni ti a ran ni si.

We should fear him who sends us with a message, not him to whom we are sent.

N.B.—Applied to messengers sent from one king or chief to another.

40.

Ero-kpesekpese; ko mo bi ara nkan igbin.

(*You may say the blow is*) very light—you do not reflect that it hurts the snail.

N.B.—Said to those who excuse their maltreatment of others on the ground that it is no great matter.

41.

Esin ri ogun, dzo; okeo ri ogun, o yo.

When the spear sees the battle, it dances; when the lance sees the battle, it joys.

42.

Ohun ti a fi eso mu ki badze; ohun ti a fi agbara mu ni ini ni li ara.

An affair which we conduct with gentleness is not marred; an affair which we conduct with violence causes us vexation.

N.B.—Said to irritable and impetuous men.

43.

Bi eya ba di ekun, eran ni ikpa dze.

When the wild cat becomes a leopard, it will devour large beasts.

44.

Afedzu toto ko mo okonri.

Frowning and fierceness prove not manliness.

N.B.—Dogs that bark don't bite.

45.

Oko nla se alamgba kpensan; o ni, behe li eni ti o dzu ni hlo ise ni.

A large stone (*being thrown*) crushed a lizard. It said —“So he who is stronger than one treats one.”

N.B.—Alluding to the strong oppressing the weak, “C'est le pot de terre contre le pot de fer.” Mr. Crowther translates “Alamgba,” “the male lizard.”

46.

Alantakun bi yi o ba o dza, a ta ka o li ara.

When the spider would attack thee, it extends its web to entangle thee.

N.B.—Applied to the intrigues of men who endeavour to ruin others. The spider is not in Yoruba, as on the Gold Coast, symbolic either of Creation or of the Evil Principle.

47.

Alasedzu kpere ni ite.

A self-willed man soon has disgrace.

N.B.—Meaning, that pride goes before destruction. “Quem Deus perdere vult, prius dementat.”

48.

Esu yi o dze, esu ye o mo, esu yi o loh; nibo li alatampoko yi o wo.

The locust will eat, the locust will drink, the locust will go;—where shall the grasshopper hide?

N.B.—Describes the effects of war.

49.

Ko si alasara ti ita igboku; gbogbo won ni ita oyin.

No (*she*) snuff-dealer sells stale snuff; they all sell the best (literally, *all of them sell snuff honey*.)

N.B.—So Oti or beer of the best quality is called by the street-girls “honey-beer.”

50.

Alaradze ko mo odun; abi isu ita bi igi.

The buyer does not consider the seasons; he thinks, perhaps, yams grow as big as logs.

N.B.—But the grower and seller does. Mr. Crowther translates the proverb thus, "a buyer knows nothing of the seasons of the year, but his yam must always be as large as a billet," because his money enables him to purchase the best of everything.

51.

A se alakpa li oso, ko gbo; a se ohun gbogbo fu igi, o ye igi.

If one ornament an old wall, it is not improved; if he do anything for wood (*by painting or carving*), it is adapted to the wood (i.e., *it is advantageous*).

N.B.—Our design is accomplished by making the wood as we desire it to be. The proverb insinuates that some persons are not to be improved by any means that we can employ.

52.

Awigbo ti ifi owo adzæ mo omi.

Disobedience will drink water with his hand tied to his neck.

N.B.—Meaning, that a person who is determined to disobey will have his own way in spite of all obstacles.

53.

Afomo ko li egbo; igi gbogbo ni ibatan.

A parasite has no root; every tree is its kindred.

N.B.—A "chevalier d'industrie" does not care where or on whom he lives.

54.

Eru ko se omo igi: eru ku, iya ko gbo: omo ku, igbe ta; eru se omo ni ile iya re ri.

A slave is not the child of a tree (i.e., *a block of wood*): if a slave dies, his mother does not hear of it; if a (*free-born*) child dies, lamentation is made: (*yet*) the slave (*too*) was once a child in his mother's house.

N.B.—Domestic slavery is the rule in Yoruba, and as in other countries where it prevails, the bondman is kindly treated—becoming, in fact, one of the family.

55.

Ada san igbo, ko ri ere igbo: o ro ona, ko ri ere ona; ada da idakuda, ada da idakuda; ada da, o fi arun gbadi, o di oko olowo; ada li eka li oron, o gbadza girigiri.

The bill-hook clears the farm, but receives no profit from the farm; the bill-hook clears the road, but receives no profit from the road; the bill-hook is badly broken, the bill-hook is badly bent; the bill-hook breaks, it pays five cowries to gird its handle with a ring; it reaches its owner's farm; (*when*) the bill-hook has a (*new*) ring on its neck (*or handle*), it is girded tightly (*for new labours*).

N.B.—Has reference to the unrequited labour of slaves.

56.

Ibi ki idzu ibi; bi a ti bi eru li a bi omo.

One birth does not differ from (*another*) birth; as the slave was born, so was the free-born child.

57.

**Bi o ti wu ki o ri, a ki rerin abiron; boya ohun
ti o se e loni a se iwo lola.**

One should never laugh at a sick person; perhaps
what afflicts him to-day may afflict thee to-morrow.

58.

Iwo ni nse abodzuwo liehin baba; todzu ile rere.

Thou art the superintendent in the master's absence;
look well to the house!

59.

**Ni igba ti agbe ba ndi abo oka, ino re a don; nikpa
abo oka ni yangidi owo iti wah.**

When the farmer is tying up corn-sheaves he rejoices;
from bundles of corn come bundles of money.

60.

**Ohun ti ise ohun abukun ki a mah se si omo-
enikedzi eni.**

A contemptuous action should not be done to our
fellow-man.

61.

**Abule ni mu aso ilo to; eni ti ko ba se todzu abule
yi o se ara re li ofo aso.**

Patching makes a garment last long; one who does not
attend to patching will come to want clothes.

N.B.—Meaning, that a man who neglects little details of
business will fail. Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take
care of themselves.

62.

**Bi a ti ran ni ni ise, li a dze; bi iwo ba seni si i,
adabowo ara re.**

As one is sent on a message, so he should deliver it ; if thou add anything to it, it is on thine own responsibility.

63.

Adan dorikodo o nwo ise eiye gbogbo.

The bat hangs with its head down, watching the actions of all birds.

N.B.—This teaches silent observation.

64.

O dze aiye dzu alaiye loh.

He enjoys the world more than the owner of the world.

N.B.—Said of the extravagant.

65.

Dolumo ekpa li oron sese, a dzebi oran wo ti.

The slander of the ground-nut (*a hypogæa*) against the white field-pea (*a climbing bean*) falls upon itself: he who is in the wrong must sit quietly apart.

N.B.—Meaning that a slanderer may injure himself more than he injures the slandered.

66.

Obanidze o ba ara re dze.

He who injures (*or despises*) another, injures (*or despises*) himself.*

67.

Abanidze mah ba ni se ifa enia; eni ti o dze didon ni idze kikan.

A guest (literally, *one who eats of the same dish*) who is no advantage to a person is selfish; he who eats the sweet should also eat the sour (*or bitter*).

N.B.—Said of persons who live on others, and will not assist in the labours of the family.

68.

Abati alakpa; a ba a ti, a ba a re.

It is a shakey wall; we push against it, and (*finding that it does not fall*) we make friends with it (*by sitting down in its shade*).

N.B.—Said of persons whom we suspected at first, but with whom we become friends.

* It is impossible to determine how many of such sayings have been borrowed from the Moslems, who in the 10th century overran the Sudan, and left many descendants. Amongst other traces of their customs, we may observe that pieces of stick, called "kponga," are placed crosswise over the body in the grave to prevent the earth from touching it. So also they say, "Saraha babba ebo"—alms are the father of (i.e., *the best of*) sacrifice. "Sara," or "Saraha" is the Moslem term for legal alms, and the Yoruban equivalent is "oreanu." Mr. Crowther erroneously asserts, "as used by the Mohammedans, these gifts are very much akin to actual sacrifice."

69.

Abebe ni ibe iku, abebe ni ibe oran; bi oru ba mu, abebe ni ibe e.

A pleader (*or supplicator to the gods*) wards off death, a pleader (*with the judge*) wards off a difficulty (*or punishment*); if the heat is severe, a fan mitigates it.

N.B.—There is a play upon the words “*abèbe*,” a pleader, and “*abebe*,” a fan of hide generally used by the upper classes. The proverb also shows the power of pleading in its sense of entreaty.

70.

Iyan mu, ire yo; iyan ro, ire ru.

When famine is sharp, the cricket is fat; when famine is relieved, the cricket is poor.

N.B.—The paranomasia—a play upon various sounds difficult to pronounce in rapid succession—is somewhat paradoxical; it means, that during hunger the cricket is eaten as if it were fat or delicious; but when the dearth is over, the cricket is rejected as poor, and unfit to eat.

71.

Odzo, kpa batta bata, batta bata, li ori akpata, li ode adzalubata; bata li igi, batta li awo.

The rain beats “shoe-drum, shoe-drum” (i.e., *patter, patter*) on the rock in the yard of the chief drummer; the drum is wood, and the shoe is leather.

N.B.—A play upon the word “*akpata*,” a rock, containing a frequent repetition of *b* and *t* sounds. Mr. Crowther translates: “The rain on the ‘*batta*’ (*shoes*) goes *patter, patter*, as on the ‘*akpata*’ (*rock*): in the street of the ‘*ajalubata*’ (*head drummer*), the ‘*bata*’ (*drum*) is wood, the ‘*batta*’ (*shoes*) are skin.”

72.

**Kanakana ba kanakana dza, kanakana da kanakana,
—eni! or odi-eni.**

A crow fought with a crow, a crow conquered a crow.—
One (or once)!

N.B.—The Yorubas amuse themselves by repeating as many times as possible, without taking breath, sentences such as the foregoing, containing a recurrence of similar sounds—a good gymnastic for the tongue. At the end of each repetition of the sentence, a bystander cries “one,” “two,” &c.; and he who repeats the sentence oftenest without a fault is victor. So boys with us learn to say “Oliver Oglethorpe ogled an owl and an oyster;” “Peter Piper picked a peck of pepper,” &c. &c. &c.

73.

**Ose ni isadsu ekun, abamo ni igbchin oran; gbogbo
otokulu kpe, nwon ko ri ebo abamo se.**

As smacking of the lips (i.e., *sorrow*) precedes weeping, so mortification follows a difficulty (or *grievous matter*); the whole population of the town assemble, but cannot find a sacrifice against mortification.

N.B.—The Yoruba people are accustomed to smack their lips several times before they begin to weep, and the noise is called “*osha*.”

74.

Ikpa obere li okun ito.

The thread follows the needle.

N.B.—Applied to anything which happens as a natural consequence. Our “trumps” or *Connu*!

75.

Abose ki ise ise odzo; ise baba ni igba odzo eni.

A job (*done for one's self*) is not the day's work (*or chief business of the slaves*); the master's work claims the chief part of one's time.

N.B.—Said to slaves, who may perform little jobs for themselves, but must not neglect their master's business.

76.

Adaridzini ni isete, edzo.

He that forgives (*the aggressor*) gains the victory in (*or ends*) the dispute.

N.B.—Inculcates a forgiving spirit.

77.

Bi Olorun ba ka ese si ni li oron, a gbe.

If God should compute our sins, we should perish.*

78.

Fi ohun we ohun, fi oran we oran; fi oran dzin, ki a yin o.

Compare thing with thing, compare matter with matter: and then forgive (*the matter*) that thou mayest be praised.

N.B.—This proverb inculcates the duties of examining the facts of a dispute—"Audi alteram partem"—and of exercising a forgiving disposition.

* Mr. Bowen observes, "I have heard this remark made by heathens in attempting to settle disputes, but am not sure that it is a national proverb." Most probably Nos. 76 and 77 are borrowed from Moslems.

79.

Abere bo li owo adete, o di ete; oran ba ile, o di ero.

If a needle fall from a leper's (*mutilated*) hand, it requires consideration (*how to pick it up*); if a difficult matter come upon the country (*or before the council*), it requires thought (*how to avert it*).

80.

Adintanmo esuo ti o li ekulu li o bi iya re.

It is like the genealogy of the Esuo, who said his grandmother was an Ekulu.

N.B.—The "Esuo" and the "Ekulu," which Mr. Crowther translates "deer," are the different species of antelope. The proverb applies to those who claim descent from great families.

81.

Elede kpa afo tan, o nwa eni rere ti yi o fi ara re yi.

The pig, having done wallowing in the mire, is seeking some clean person to rub against.

N.B.—It resembles our fable of the monkey that had lost its tail, and is said of disgraced men who would intrude themselves upon society.

82.

Onifura ti itete ise onile kpele.

A suspicious character (*being found in the house*) immediately salutes the owner of the house (*before he is saluted*).

83.

Agada ko mo ori alagbede.

The Agada (*short sword*) does not know the head of the blacksmith (*who made it*).

N.B.—This and the following are said of the ungrateful.

84.

Agbedze gba won la, a ni ki a kpa a ni kpansa.

The calabash having saved them (*in time of famine*), they said, "Let us cut it for a drinking cup."

85.

A ri abanidze agbon isale; bi o ku li owuro, a ya li ale.

We meet with guests who are like the lower jaw; if one die in the morning, it separates (*from the upper jaw*) in the evening.

N.B.—Alluding to those who forsake their friends in time of trouble.

86.

Akparo dzare adzanakpa, ki li o, mu aso wah ise li oko? A dzare akparo, li oko li a gbe imu aso iloh.

The partridge argued concerning the bird-snare of cloth, "Why did the farmer bring cloth to the farm?" He replied to the partridge, "We are accustomed to take our over-clothes to the farm."*

* Mr. Crowther translates it far better. "The partridge says, 'What business has the farmer to bring his cloth here?' The farmer says, 'How could I come to my farm without cloth?'"

N.B.—The partridge, seeing a cloth so spread out as to form a bird-snare, was suspicious, and said, "What does he mean by this?" The farmer replied that people always bring their wrappers to the farm, laying them on the grass or bush while at work. The proverb asserts, with Sir Roger de Coverley, that there is much to be said on both sides of a question.

Mu properly means to catch, but has many significations. Hence the general use of catch in African-English, *e. g.*, "he catch ten," for "there were ten," &c.

87.

Adze, Saluga, o fi eni iwadzu sile se eni ehin ni kpele.*

Aje (*God of Fortune, or rather Money*), the elevator, he leaves the foremost to deal favourably with the hindmost.

N.B.—Meaning, that the first may sometimes be last, and the last first—that the battle and the race are not always to the strong and the swift.

88.

Adze, omo he—iya mi soro ga, (or mi sho wogan,) a kpa mah gbagun.

The witch, child of envy—my troubles are sore and hard—she kills but cannot inherit.

N.B.—The witch in Yoruba, like the Vampire in Greece, destroys people when asleep by sucking their blood. So the Jigar-

* Mr. Crowther adds, "o ri ki oran ki o tan," and translates the whole, "Aje often passes by the first caravan, as it comes to market, and loads the last with blessings."

khwar in Persia eats their livers. Mr. Crowther declares the owl to be the bird into which the witch passes when wishing to work evil : it is certainly much feared by the Krumen.

89.

Adzekasu ko mo bi iyan mu.

The man who has bread to eat (literally, *one who eats the large loaf*) does not appreciate the severity of a famine.

90.

Akeke ti nke igi ko se ; gbenagbena mbu etu ai atari.

The axe which cuts the tree is not afraid ; but the woodman makes a sacrifice to his head.*

N.B.—Some kinds of trees are supposed to be inhabited by evil spirits like the Hindoo Rakshasa, which might cause the axe to cut the woodman, unless the latter offered a sacrifice to his good genius, which resides in the head.

91.

Abetele ni ifodzu onidadzo ; notori abetele ki ile ise idadzo otito.

A bribe blinds the judge, for a bribe cannot give a true judgment (*or even speak the truth*).

* Mr. Crowther prefixes Ake kan wo igbo agbo okiki, "An axe enters a forest ; we hear a sound."

92.

Bi o kun oni kun ola ki ogbe, ki o kpa agiliti, odzo a ro.

If there remain to-day or to-morrow before the iguana will die of thirst, rain will surely fall.

N.B.—This proverb shows the providence of the Creator over his creatures.

93.

Fi idza, fu Olorun dza; fi owo la eran.

Leave the battle to God, and rest your head (*or temple*) upon your hand (*as a spectator*).

N.B.—This favourite proverb of *one* of the Yoruba chiefs inculcates trust in the protection of the Almighty, like many similar sayings, as “take no thought for the morrow,” which are more honoured in the breach than in the observance. “Aide toi, et Dieu t’aidera,” is the apophthegm of a northern climate.

94.

Tinotino tehintehin ni labalaba ifi iyin fu Olorun.

(*By its beauty*) the butterfly praises God within and without (i.e., *in all its parts*).^{*} Mr. Crowther adds *labalaba ku li ilewu*, and translates the whole, “Behind and before the butterfly praises God (i.e., *it is beautiful all over*), though (*when touched*) it crumbles into dust like a cinder.”

^{*} This proverb again shows distinctly the influence of Semitic thought.

95.

Izi agba oti, dzi agba etu; eni ti a ran wah, ki idzi agba.

Open the cask of rum, open the keg of powder (*if yours*); he that is sent with it dares not open the cask.

N.B.—Alludes to the fidelity of the Yoruba carriers, who are honest as the Arrieros of Spain and Teneriffe.

96.

Ogun ko ro ike, agbede ko ro bata; oko ko soro ro agbede ko kpa oko ta.

Ogun (*the god of blacksmiths and soldiers*) does not work ivory, the blacksmith does not work leather; if the farm were not hard to till, the blacksmith would not make hoes for sale.

N.B.—Every man to his trade. "Ne sutor ultra crepidam."

97.

Ile kan wa li Oyo ni igba atidzo, ti a nkpe Akidze, Oibo ku mbe.

In old times there was a house in Oyo (*Eyeo or Ka-tunga*) called Silence: an Oibo or white man died there.

N.B.—Historical and other facts are often thus transmitted to posterity. Oyo, pronounced Anyau, is the ancient capital of the Yoruba Empire, destroyed by the Fulas in 1835. The word Oibo, or "Eibo" (*Ambo in the Iketu dialect*), from Bo, to greet, means a white man; hence "Orombo," an orange—literally, White man's fruit.

98.

O sure iku, o bo si ako ida.*

He fled from the sword, and hid in the scabbard (*into which the sword will return*).

N.B.—The same as our saying, “Out of the frying-pan into the fire.”

99.

A ri ti eni mo iwi, i fi akpadi bo ti re mole.

We see that one knows how to speak (*the faults of others*), although he covers his own with a potsherd.

N.B.—“Tu vois une paille qui est dans l’œil de ton frère, mais tu ne vois pas ce qui est dans ton œil.”

100.

A ki igba akaka lowo akiti; a ki igba ile baba lowo eni.

We cannot prevent a baboon squatting (*because it is his nature*); he cannot take from a man his homestead (*because it is his natural right*).†

* Mr. Crowther also gives, *Mio sa osa iku, mo si bo si akko idas*.

† Mr. Crowther gives, besides this one, another version of the first clause: *Aki igba Agballe lowo Arabi, i.e., “No one can separate the Agballe from the Arabi”*—two insects always found together.

101.

Ase oran ikoko sebi on li a mbawi, abi ara ifu bi eni se ohun.

The perpetrator of a secret crime supposes it is he they are talking about (*if he sees men in conversation*); his face being pale as one who has done something wrong.

N.B.—“*Stultè nudabit animi conscientiam.*”

102.

Asorokele bodzuwo igbe; igbe ki iro; eni ti a ba so ni ese ikukpani.

A whisperer watches the bush (*if he hears a noise*); a bush never tells secrets; he to whom one speaks is the traitor.

N.B.—If a man wish his secrets to be kept, he should not confide them to others.

103.

Odo ki kon ki o bo edza li odzu.

The river is never so full as to obscure the sight of the fish.

N.B.—No scheme or purpose is too deep to be confided to a friend—somewhat contradictory to No. 102.

104.

Baba bo baba mole.

A great affair covers up (*or puts out of sight*) a small matter.

105.

Bagadai ! igi du oloko sa.

By the staff of Egugun ! the tree fell and startled the farmer.

N.B.—Bagadai is a common oath. Egun or Egugun—(lit., bones) is the Mumbo-Jumbo of Yoruban mythology. The proverb suggests “Parturiunt montes nascetur ridiculus mus.”

106.

Ebo alakoto.

“The sacrifice in the basket”—a euphuism for human sacrifice; probably because, as at Dahome, the victim, placed in a kind of basket-work canoe, was precipitated from a high platform and beheaded. In Yoruba a sacrifice is sometimes offered for the whole nation, when the victim is either killed or is kept alive in chains to sweep the idols’ temples.

107.

Elekun, or Isokun.

A weeper, a mourner, and figuratively a daughter, who in Asia is called the “domestic calamity.” So the people say “O bi isokun, o bi iwale,” he begat a mourner and a grave-digger (i.e., *a son*).

108.

Elemi.

One who has breath—a servant; so called, because his master’s life is in his hands.

109.

Bi enia enni ba ku li okere akpa eta re wo ille.

When a relative dies at a distance, a small fragment of his remains is brought home.

N.B.—Eta is a fragment of a corpse (such as his hair or nails) brought home to the family, who perform over it funeral rites.

110.

Idi baba akosa.

The eagle is the father of birds of prey.

111.

Odudua, igba nla medzi a de i ai.

Heaven and earth, two large calabashes, shut not to be open.

112.

Ogo.

A person sitting daily at another's door, to shame him into payment of a debt.

N.B.—Equivalent to the well-known custom, "dharna bait'hna," of the Hindus.

113.

Aditi wo ni li enu sun.

The deaf look surprised on people's mouths (*when speaking*).

114.

Asongon obiri asowo mah de odza.

A long slender trading woman, who never reaches the market.

N.B.—A riddle, meaning a canoe, which is left at the landing-place when the owner goes to the market. So in Hindi—That which follows every one, i.e., a shadow.

115.

Ogun kun Osa kun o kun tirin ko kpade.

There remain the "Ogun" (*river*), the "Osa" (*lake*), and the slender, which you have not met (i.e., *crossed*.)

N.B.—Meaning the nose.

116.

Agbongbere kpete igara.

The snatch game (*of children*) resembles (lit., *thinks of*) robbery.

N.B.—Agbongbere is a child's play of *snatching vegetables* from one another.

117.

Onibaba ni itodzu orombo, onide ni itodzu awede.

The owner of copper ornaments looks for (*the fruit of*) a lemon, the owner of brass looks for "Awede."

N.B.—Awede is a herb used for cleaning brass. The saying means, "Each man for himself."

118.

Ena awon.

Fire of tortoise—*i.e.*, mirage, the flickering appearance of the atmosphere in hot dry weather. It is supposed to be an underground fire made by the tortoise to kill the trees, by burning them at the roots.

119.

Edofofo.

A liver of foam—*i.e.*, irascibility. Among Africans, as Asiatics, the liver is the seat of the passions and affections; hence "Gbodo" (*i.e. gba edo, to receive liver*) means to dare, to be courageous. So, in olden England, the spleen, and in modern times, the heart, usurp the functions of the brain.

120.

Fun le fo lorun.

Freely, of one's own accord (*lit., for the earth and for God*).

121.

Odzu, re wah ile.

He came to himself (*after being mad or drunk; lit., his eye came to the ground*).

122.

Bafin, or Ibafin.

Eunuchs, of whom there were six in the palace of the King of Yoruba: they are also called Iwefa.

123.

Enu mi si.**My mouth opens (i.e., *my appetite returns—est ouvert*).**

124.

Mo gbon li owo mo gbon lesse temi tan.**My hands and feet are shaken (i.e., *I am in extreme poverty*).**

125.

Iyo Oyibo.**White man's salt (i.e., *refined sugar*).**

The following proverbs in the Yoruba language are from the vocabulary of the Rev. Samuel (now Bishop) Crowther.* That excellent divine has kindly assisted me with sundry explanations which do not appear in the latest edition of his book. Many of them will strike the reader "like the maxims in 'Poor Richard's Almanac,' which pass for deep wisdom with the vulgar of all nations."† Others are neatly expressed and ingenious in application. There are many also which even Mr. Crowther could not well explain, though on occasions they become exceedingly *à propos*. The people are at

* A Vocabulary of the Yoruba Language. Compiled by the Rev. Samuel Crowther, Native Missionary of the Church Missionary Society. Seeleys, Fleet Street, London, 1852.

† China. Being the *Times'* Special Correspondent from China. By George Wingrove Cooke. G. Routledge & Co., London, 1858.

once noted for speaking in proverbs and are remarkably "touchy"—"thin skinned"—sensitive. Such a saying as "the monkey's grandmother was a fool" would raise a storm of wrath if addressed by one Yoruba man to another.

1.

Abanigbele ma mo oju enni.

An inmate which cannot be tamed, *i.e.*, fire.

2.

Ohun abapade ko jo ohun ti ari telle.

An accident is not like an expected result.

3.

Aso funfun on abawon ki ire.

A white cloth and a stain never agree.

N.B.—Said when a drunken man, for instance, is brought, or intrudes himself, into the society of the sober.

4.

Bi oran ba su okunkun abe e wo li abbe.

If the matter be dark, dive to the bottom.

N.B.—Equivalent to our "Look before you leap."

5.

Ohun ti ako fe ki enia ki omo li ase li abbelle.
What is not wished to be known, is done in secrecy.

6.

Didi ni imu abe imu.
Wrapping up a razor preserves its sharpness.

N.B.—Meaning, that a clever man should conceal his talents.

7.

Enniti mbe abeiyanu yio ri ohun ti nfe gba lowo oluware.

He who begs with importunity will get what he wants.

8.

Abiamo abehin jija.
A mother with a kicker (i.e., *a struggling child*) on her back. A playful expression used in addressing a woman with an infant.

9.

Aso abila gbogbo li o li oruko.
Each coloured cloth has its name.

N.B.—Meaning, that everything has its meaning and its use.

10.

Enniti ko fe oran enni ni ise abinokuenni.
He who does not love his neighbour acts maliciously.

11.

Bi aso kpe li abo a hu.

If clothes remain long in the bag they rot.

N.B.—So the Arabs say, "Standing water stinks," in opposition to our "Rolling stone gathers no moss." It is also applied to the miserly, who waste their wealth by hoarding it.

12.

Enniti o ba mo idi oran telle on ni ibu abuja eke.

He who knows a matter beforehand confounds the liar.

13.

Bi aba bu igbe li abuka ari eranko ino re pa.

If a bush is surrounded the animals in it are easily killed.

N.B.—Meaning, that everything may be accomplished by the force of numbers.

14.

A ki isipe inaro fu abuke.

A hunchback is never asked to stand upright.

N.B.—We are not to order impossibilities.

15.

Aburo ki ipa egbon ni itan.

The young cannot teach tradition to the old.

16.

Adaba kekeluke ko si oja ti ko na tan.

There is no market in which the dove with the prominent breast has not traded.

N.B.—The cowrie, on account of its circulation as currency, is compared with the dove.

17.

Ki adaba-susu ki owi fu jediedie, ki eiye ki owi fu eiye.

Let the white pigeon tell the woodpecker, and bird tell bird.

N.B.—It means, let the matter be spread abroad; also that friends must support one another.

18.

Bi opo enia ba kuro li egbe ofo adanilaraya ni ifo ni jojo.

Though many guests are absent, he only who enlivens the party is missed.

N.B.—Said in company.

19.

Adaniloju ko se ifi ehin ti.

He who disappoints another is unworthy to be trusted.

20.

Adaniloro fi agbara ko ni.

He who torments another (*only*) teaches him to strengthen himself.

21.

Adape oro ki ije ki amo itumo oruko.

Contraction of words conceals the sense.

N.B.—Opposed to our “Brevity is the soul of wit.”

22.

Aji bo wa iba li aba ila li atellewo, awa ko mo enni ti o ko o, aji bo wa iba li owo adasan, awa ko mo enni ti o je e.

We wake and find (i.e., *we find as soon as we have consciousness*) marks on the palms of our hand; we do not know who made the marks: we wake and find an old debt, and we know not who incurred it.

N.B.—Shows how easily man “runs into debt.”

23.

Obba ko ni filla ade li oni.

The Obba (*or king*) has no cap, but a crown.

N.B.—The “Filla” is the “Kantop” of India, a cap with the flaps for the ears. The “Ade” is a kind of crown studded with beads. The proverb means, that a king must not use common things.

24.

Adebipani ki ise ore enni.

He who causes one's starvation is not one's friend.

25.

Adiredo, ko se ibo Ipori.

A waterfowl is not fit to worship the tutelary god Ipori.

N.B.—Ipori (i.e., *Ikpo ori*) is the big toe worshipped by the Yorubas. The saying touches the fitness of things.

26.

Adire-iranna ni isaju oku.

The fowl is the forerunner of the dead.

N.B.—The Adire-iranna is a fowl beheaded at the death of a person, and the blood is sprinkled over the corpse, as its passport to the invisible world. This saying is constantly used at funerals.

27.

Enni ti o pa afe-imojo, ki omu re Oyo, eda li ara oko ije.

Whoever kills an Afe-imojo must bear it to Oyo (*the capital of Yoruba*); the Eda only is due to the people of the province to eat.

N.B.—The Afe-imojo is an animal of the rat kind, whose tail—a royalty—is used by the King of Yoruba, in sign of distinction: he generally holds it before his mouth when he walks abroad, a custom followed by his subjects with meaner articles. The Eda is a common rat, which breeds very fast.

28.

Afeno ni ti iyangbo.

Chaff is to be fanned away.

N.B.—This is a superstitious saying, a curse acting as a charm: "As the chaff is blown away, so may your evil intentions against me be dispersed."

29.

Afnosajere afehin se ikoko.

The faithless man (*receives your words*) in a perforated vessel, but keeps behind his back the vessel (*which would retain them*), or turns his back instead of his face.

30.

Ohun ti afoju fi oju re ri ki oto fo, an li ori mo, ko ton omiran ri mo.

What the blind saw before he was blind, is the last sight he ever shall see.

N.B.—This would be said, for instance, of a fallen usurper.

31.

Agadagodo ko mo ino ara won.

One lock does not know the wards of another.

N.B.—Meaning, he is a reserved man whose secrets are not known.

32.

Agbada ya li oron o baje.

An Agbada torn at the neck is spoiled.

N.B.—The Agbada is a kind of loose garment. The proverb means, that a slip or a blunder ruins action.

33.

Igba dodo li agbado igbani.

Indian corn is the true support of a people.

34.

Agbari ko ni modunmodun.

A mere skull has no brains (*moisture*) in it. (This would be said of a morose, an unfriendly, or a miserly man.)

35.

Agbassa babba okuta.

A boulder is the father of rocks.

N.B.—This is the first sample of many similar sayings that will occur. It is said by way of compliment, praise, or flattery either to, or of, a "superior person."

36.

Agbatan li agba olle.

You must help an idle man thoroughly (*if you help him at all*).

37.

Agbe ni ije egbin omi, agbalagba ni ijiya oran.

As a calabash receives the sediment of water, so an elder must exercise forbearance.

38.

Bi apon omi bi o dano, bi agbe ko ba fo aton omiran pon.

When one is carrying water and happens to spill it, if the calabash be not broken, you can get more.

39.

Agbe ni ida aro, Aluko ni ikosun, Lekeleke li allala funfun.

The Agbe is the dyer in blue (i.e., *has blue feathers*); the Aluko is the painter of red dye (i.e., *has red*), but the Lekeleke is the owner of the white cloth (i.e., *is white*).

N.B.—The Agbe and the Aluko are different species of jays; the Lekeleke is the crane, called in India a paddy-bird.

40.

Iwo ba agbebo adire li oja iwo ntagere si i ira, iba se rere oluwa re ko je ta a.

You met a hen in the market, and hastened to purchase her; had she been worth keeping the owner would not have sold her.

N.B.—Often said, and justly said, of those who purchase adult slaves.

41.

Agbeje ko koro ni ille nla.

The squash is never bitter in a large family.

N.B.—Agbeje is an early pumpkin, much eaten before other vegetables are in season.* The proverb means, that in an extensive household there should be no wastefulness.

42.

Agbo meji ko mo omi akoto kan.

Two rams cannot drink out of the same calabash.

N.B.—There cannot be two suns in the same sphere.

* See Mr. Bowen's Collection, No. 83.

43.

Roro agbo ni imu agbo niyin, olla ti babba ni imu ommoiyan.

A ram's mane gives him a noble appearance; a father's honour makes a son proud.

44.

Agbon ko se ije fun eiye ki eiye.

Agbon (*the cocoa tree, and its nut*) is not good for a bird to eat.

N.B.—Said of or to one who undertakes something beyond his powers. So Æsop's fable of the frog and the bull.

45.

Mo mo o tan ko je agbon ki o li oro.

Self-conceit deprives the wasp of honey.

46.

Bi o boju bi o bonu isalle agbon li a ipari re si.

When the face is washed, you finish at the chin.

N.B.—This is a proverbial saying when a dispute is ended. "It is all settled, and the child's name is Anthony."

47.

Aki ifa eran ikon gbon eran agbon yin no.

No one will throw away venison for squirrel's flesh.

48.

Enniti npe' o ko sunkonu, iwo li ogbo agboya.

He is going on calling you, and you pretend to be deaf.

N.B.—Meaning that a wilful man will have his way.

49.

Agidi ti on ti iyonnu, akurete ti on ti iya.

An implacable person is always a source of trouble, a pliable person is sure to suffer.

50.

Agiliti abi ara yiyi.

The Agiliti (*or iguana*) with a rough skin.

N.B.—Applied to those with cutaneous disorders.

51.

Akisa aso li afi isu osuka: Illu kan mbe nwon ama pe illu na ni illu alagisa.

“Rags make up a pad:” there is a town called “Rag-Town.”

N.B.—This is one of many explanatory and memorial sayings—it simply illustrates the meaning of the words Illu alagisa.

52.

Agoro ti o gbon sasa ebite pa a ambotori malaju.

The Ago is caught in a trap: how much more the Malaju?

N.B.—The Ago is a striped rat remarkable for its craft, and care of its young. The Malaju is a kind of water rat noted for stupidity.

53.

Eiyelle ko li agogo kiki arupe.

There is no tallness among pigeons: they are all dwarfs.

N.B.—Meaning that where there is no head, all are masters: said when there is too much of *égalité* in a society.

54.

Aja ti ire re ba daniloju li ade si agoro.

The dog which is known to be very swift is set to catch the hare.

N.B.—This is said of a confident man.

55.

Bi ako ba le itete kolle ago li apa na.

If one is not able at once to build a house, a shed is first erected.

56.

Ago won de ara ihin.

An Ago (*suffers his dependents to be slothful*), till some one shall come (*who shall awaken them*).

N.B.—The Ago is the opposite of our "martinet." The saying means that if one king be over-indulgent to his subjects, his successor will change the aspect of affairs. Our King Log and King Stork.

57.

Aguala mba osu irin nwon sebi aja re ni ise:
Aguala ki ise aja osupa.

Venus (*the planet*) travels with the moon; they suppose it to be her dog: Venus is not the moon's dog.

N.B.—This is a saying difficult to illustrate. It might be applied to two men who travel together independently, whilst one is taken to be the servant of the other. Aguala, or the planet Venus, is called in Yoruba the “moon's dog.” The Oji tribes call her Kekye, or Kekyepevarre, *i.e.*, Kekye who desires to marry. The negroes say it is betrothed to the moon; the Hindus believe the nymphæa lotus to be enamoured of the “lesser light,” and constantly pursuing but never able to catch the object of its desires.

58.

Ahere ni yio kehin oko, atta ni yio kehin ille.

The farmhouse remains to the last (*upon the ground*), and the ridge of the roof completes the building.

N.B.—This proverb means that a man will be compelled to seek a shelter at last.

59.

Ahon ni ipinle ennu.

The tongue is the end of the mouth.

N.B.—A compliment like No. 35.

60.

Aigboran babba afojudi.

Disobedience is the father of insolence.

61.

Bi ako li aiya rindo rindo, aki ije ayan.

If the stomach be not strong, do not eat cockroaches.

62.

Aiye li Okun, enia li Ossa, aki imo cive ki ako aiye ja.

The world is (*or may be compared to*) an ocean: mankind is the Ossa Lagoon (*between Lagos and Badagry*): however well a person swims, he cannot cross the world.

N.B.—It is presumptuous for a man to attempt all things—
Non omnia possumus omnes.

63.

Aja egberun ko gbo oruko.

A dog valued at half-a-crown cannot be taught.

N.B.—Meaning an old dog; half-a-crown being the price of a full-grown animal.

64.

Okipa aja li afi ibo Ogun.

An old dog must be sacrificed to Ogun.

N.B.—Meaning that Ogun claims the best.

65.

Aja ti ko leti ko se idegbe.

A stupid dog will not do for the chase.

66.

Ajabo ni ti Iwe, bi Iwe ja abo lowo oloko.

The Iwe (*or little edible frog, also used in charms and philtres*) is sure to slip from the farmer's hands.

N.B.—A superstitious saying of a good omen. "If I am made prisoner in battle (or *e. g.*, when thieving), I am sure to escape."

67.

Ajadi agbon odi olara.

A basket with its bottom burst is useless.

N.B.—Equivalent to our "ne'er do weel."

68.

Ajagajigi enniti o mi kukute mi 'ra re.

He who tries to shake the trunk of a tree, only shakes himself.

69.

Pansa ille o li ariwo nino ajaille ba agba li eru.

When a grave is made, there is a great deal of noise (*from the labourers who loathe the task*); and the sight of a vault makes old men tremble.

N.B.—Ajaille is the roof of a grave, or a pit-fall with thorns, to trap thieves, like the "Ogi" of India.

70.

Ogbogbo awon ni bi Ajako.

He who kills an Ajako (*a dog-like animal*) is sure to suffer for it.

N.B.—A popular superstition.

71.

Ogun ja agbara otte sono.**The enemy pulls down the fortifications.****N.B.—***Væ victis!*

72.

**Oku ajannaku li ayo ogbo si, ta li oje yo oju agada
si eran, alabo owo.****It is easy to cut to pieces a dead elephant; but no one
dares attack a live one.**

73.

Ko se eku ko se eiye ajao.**The bat * is neither rat nor bird.****N.B.—**Meaning that a person is neither one thing nor the other.

74.

Ki Ajinde olla ki oje.**May a future resurrection answer (*my hopes*)!****N.B.—**Evidently borrowed from El Islam.

75.

Bi ille ko kan ille ki ijo ajoran.**Houses not contiguous do not easily catch fire.****N.B.—**Meaning that if we are not over familiar we shall not quarrel.*** This appears to be the meaning of "Ajao."**

76.

Ennu li akparo ifi ipe ora, ani kiki ora, kiki ora.

With the mouth the Akparo (*partridge*) proclaims its fat, crying "Nothing but fat (*kika ora*)! nothing but fat!"

N.B.—Said of a person that praises himself.

77.

Iwo li ojuti bi aka.

You are bashful like the armadillo.

N.B.—A common saying.

78.

Bi oku ba ku laiye akala amo li orun.

The vulture scents the carcase, however high in the air he may be.

N.B.—Said of a "Paul Pry."

79.

Ko gbino eru, ko ra edo omma.

He is not angry on account of slaves, nor peevish on account of children.

N.B.—Said (and pointedly too) of one who has the patience of Job.

80.

Bi o ba gbo ogun mi, ki iduro din akaraku.

Whenever he hears of my war, he never waits to make provision.

N.B.—Said of the malignant, who rejoices at another's trouble.

81.

Akasu babba ekko.

Akashu is the father of other loaves.

N.B.—“Akashu” is a large lump of the native bread, called Agidi at Sierra Leone, and in Yoruba, Ekko.* The saying means that he laughs at scars who never felt a wound.

82.

Akatanpo ko to ija ija, ta li o mu iggi wa iko loju?

A cross bow is not enough to go to war with (*since the introduction of fire-arms*): whom do you dare to face with a stick?

N.B.—The Akatapo, or Akatanpo, is the cross-bow, probably introduced by the early Portuguese, now obsolete in these regions, but still used amongst the Mpangwe or Fans of the Gaboon river, and other tribes lying to the south of them. The saying is applied contemptuously to a weak opponent.

83.

Alakatanpo fi oju woka.

A cross-bowman is obliged to look upwards.

N.B.—Meaning that to effect certain purposes certain steps must be taken.

84.

Akede ko jiyan gbigbona.

The Akede (*or public crier*) does not eat warm food.

N.B.—He is liable to be called away at any moment from his meat. This is said of men of business.

* Mr. Bowen's collection, No. 88.

85.

Akeke ojogan fi id ija ara, ille fi oju di ni, akeke ko se idi ni ibo.

A scorpion stings with his tail; a domestic is apt to be insolent; one cannot hide a scorpion in the hand.

N.B.—Said of slaves who do not fear their master.

86.

Akete kekere ko gba enia meji.

A small bed will not hold two persons.

87.

Aki iti chin akisalle iwure.

One cannot bless the gods without using the word "Akishalle."

N.B.—Akishalle is a running plant with a pealike pod. This is a peculiar saying. The syllable "sha" (*as in ori-sha*) often enters into the names of the gods, and thus the meaning would be, we can do nothing without aid.

88.

Akisa ba enni rere je.

Rags disgrace a handsome person.

N.B.—"Fine feathers make fine fowls;" or "God makes and apparel shapes."

89.

Iwo iba ri, iwo ko gboddo wi; ni ipa akoni.

You may see but not dare to speak (*of the danger*): it is that which is the death of the strong man.

N.B.—Meaning that the strong man often perishes for want of warning.

90.

Akonrin ko li elegbe.

The singer has no one to take part in the chorus with him.

N.B.—Said when there is but one “base exception;” when no one shares your sentiments.

91.

Akudin Asapa ko konno ake.

The heart of the Ashakpa tree fears no axe.

N.B.—The Ashakpa is a hard-wood tree used for roofs and joists, posts and rafters. The wood makes good charcoal, and the leaves cure the small-pox. The proverb is applied to a “heart of oak,”—a strong and brave man.

92.

Aladugbo ki ida olla.

A near neighbour need not take (*a final*) leave till to-morrow.

93.

Alafia babba ore.

Peace is the father of friendship.

N.B.—“Alafia” is an Arabic noun and article **الافيا**: in Yoruba it means “peace” or “health,” and is a common salutation.

94.

Alagbe ko ku li Oyo.

A beggar never dies of want in Ozo (*the capital*).

N.B.—(*The same cannot be said of London*)—The beggar says the above proverbially, wherever he may be, “Some charitable man will surely feed me.”

95.

Alajapa ko li eran li aiya.

A petty trader has no flesh upon her bosom.

N.B.—Meaning that the Alajapa-woman, who buys at one town and sells for some small profit at another, wears herself to a skeleton. Thus the proverb somewhat resembles our “Care killed a cat.”

96.

Alakatanpo oju ko le ita eran pa.

He who has only his eyebrow for a cross-bow can never kill an animal.

97.

Papa li assa awonso bi alakele.

A noisy weaver, who imitates his master weaver (i. e., *the one who cuts off the lengths of cloth*).

N.B.—“Papa” expresses the sound of the aley. The saying is addressed complementarily to a weaver.

98.

Alari babba aso.

Alari is the prince of decorations.

N.B.—Alari (*which also means scarlet*) here alludes to a kind of red cotton grown in Hausa. The saying is complimentary, like Nos. 35 and 59.

99.

Alla funfun otta Orisa.

A white cloth is an object of hatred to the gods.

N.B.—Because it is worn out in their service. The saying is ironical, “A willing horse is worked to death.”

100.

Egbon iwaju alugbon babba.

An elder brother is a resemblance to a father.

N.B.—The “scorpion” is not known to this stage of civilisation.

101.

Alukembu babba assa.

The stirrup is the father of the saddle.

N.B.—Complimentary.

102.

Bi ina jo abowo fun aluki.

When fire burns up the bush, it respects the Aluki plant.

N.B.—The Aluki is a slender prickly plant.

103.

Amodun ko riri, je ki amura ki asise.

The coming year is not out of sight; let us be up and work.

N.B.—These people have not yet been forbidden to take any thought for the morrow. The saying is addressed to the indolent and the dilatory.

104.

Amokun ni eru on wo, ki ise lori, ni ille li o ti wo lo.

A lame man said his load was not upright, and was answered, “Its unevenness began from the ground (i. e., *from your lame foot*).”

N.B.—Meaning that bad workmen complain of their tools; and addressed to the sluggard and the spendthrift.

105.

Amgbadu obbe onse.

The Amgbadu is the sauce of messengers.

N.B.—The Amgbadu is the "Crane-crane" of Sierra Leone: messengers, who are many in number, are usually entertained with a sauce made of this cheap and common vegetable. The saying might be used by one about to give a large "dinner-party."

106.

Antete o da yanpan yanpan sille.

The Antete cricket causes a stir and confusion.

N.B.—Said of a backbiter who bites and backs out.

107.

Bi ommo da ori kan apa, apa a: bi o si da ori kan iroko, iroko ako o li onna.

If a child treats the Apa tree insolently, it wounds his head; if he treats the Iroko tree civilly, it welcomes him.

N.B.—The Apa is popularly called African mahogany (*Oldfieldia Africana*); it is used for drums, and is believed to become luminous at night. The Iroko is a tree used for building, and thus becomes an emblem of refuge, whilst the Apa is that of vengeance. The proverb contains a play upon words, and means also "do not be insolent."

108.

Apadi li o to iko ina loju.

Nothing but a potsherd can face fire.

N.B.—A calabash cannot. The meaning would be, it is only a tough man that can weather this storm.

109.

Apani ki ije ki amu ida lo ni ipako on.

The executioner never lets the sword be passed across his own neck.

110.

Apari fojudi abbe.

A bald-headed man does not care for a razor.

111.

Apata ri iku kehin si, apata ni igba ni li ogun.

When a shield sees death, it (*does not fly from it, but*) turns its outside (*lit. back*) to meet it: a shield is a protection in the front of battle.

N.B.—Meaning that a shield is useful in war; also as the Persians say, “the left arm is brave,” because raised to defend the head from a sabre cut.

112.

Apejure li agbedde iro or Apejure li onna ise.

The smith (*or artisan*) always follows a pattern.

N.B.—We must learn of others.

113.

Ma fi ti re ko mi li oron li oda fu apena on owu.

(*The pin says to the cotton*), “Do not hang your trouble on my neck.” This is always the dispute between the cotton and the pin.

N.B.—Apena is the pin upon which spun cotton is wound for sale. The saying would be applied to one who, like the “fox that lost his tail,” wants to involve others in his own troubles.

114.

Die die li amo apere.

By degrees one understands a sign (*or pattern*).

N.B.—Meaning that in all things study is necessary; there is wisdom in roasting eggs.

115.

Ijaje ema ko di ennu apo.

A rascal never closes the mouth of his bag.

N.B.—A spendthrift cannot cease from spending.

116.

Ibaje apo ni ibaje apa, bi apa ba ja, apo aballe.

The injury of a bag is caused by the injury of the pack-rope; if the pack-rope breaks, the bag will go down.

N.B.—Warning men not to rest on things insecure. There is also a play upon the words “apo” and “apa.”

117.

Araba nla ommo agberu gbake.

A large Araba receives (*into its substance*) the heft and axe together.

N.B.—The Araba is the bombax, or cotton-tree; and the saying means that the greater power overwhelms the less,—the weakest goes to the wall.

118.

O bo lowo Agballe. o kun Arabi.

When the Agballe is overpowered, there remains only the power of the Arabi (*to be subdued*).

N.B.—The Agballe and the Arabi are two insects always found together. The saying is our Divide et impera.

119.

Araiye abi oju pete.

Mankind presents a circumscribed countenance (i. e., *appearance*).

N.B.—Meaning that the nature of things human is limited.

120.

Aran ni ipari oso.

Velvet gives a finish to dress.

N.B.—Used peculiarly: when a matter is decided, the proverb would be quoted comparing the peace-maker to velvet.

121.

Enniti o fe arewa o fe iyonnu.

He who marries a beauty marries trouble.

N.B.—So the Spaniards say, a handsome wife brings no fortune.

122.

Denge tutu lehin ino re gbona bi arifi.

Though the pap is cold on the back (i. e., *surface*), yet the inside is very hot.

N.B.—Still waters run deep.

123.

Aro ni idena Orisa.

The Aro (*man with withered limb*) is the porter at the gate (i. e., *stationary servant*) to the gods.

N.B.—Mr. Crowther quotes Milton's Sonnet on his blindness :—

“They also serve who only stand and wait.”

124.

Ljo ba o bi oran ikunle ba aro.

The matter is to you what the task of kneeling is to one of withered limbs.

125.

Aro ki iru eru ki o ma so.

The Aro does not always bear its load: it will be put down (*sooner or later*).

N.B.—“Aro” is a native hearth, three clods or stones supporting the pot over the fire. The saying is consolatory, “Things at the worst will surely mend.”

126.

Asinwin Ika, asiwere Iluka, nwon darijo nwon li awon nsore.

A fool of Ika (*town*) and an idiot of Iluka (*town*) meet together to make friendship with each other.

N.B.—So the French proverb, “Ceux qui se ressemblent s'assemblent.”

127.

Aso babba ija.

Wrangling is the father of fighting.

128.

Asa gbe mi li adire ko duro nitori ti o, mo ohun ti o se.

The hawk having caught my chicken will not stay, because it knows it has done (*wrong*).

N.B.—So we say, "Le crime est quelquefois en sûreté, jamais il n'est tranquille."

129.

Asawi eje ennikan se are.

Words selected in a dispute (i. e., a *one-sided statement of the case*) always appear right.

N.B.—Confirmed by the dictum of a certain Welsh magistrate.

130.

Asaya ki ije ki ommo oya ki o gbon.

(*The dog*) playing with the young (*and inexperienced*) hedgehog, does not suffer it to be wise (i. e., *throws it off its guard*).

N.B.—Said when an unwary man is deceived by rogues.

131.

Oju oloju ko jo iju enni, ashindeni ko wopo.

Another's eye is not (*faithful*) like one's own: agents are not numerous.

N.B.—So said Mr. Elwes of servants.

132.

Asisori ko ni ikun bi agba, otosi ko lowo bi oloro.

A pistol has not a bore like a cannon : a poor man has not money (*at his command*) like the rich.

N.B.—So we advise men to cut their coats according to their cloth.

133.

Enniti o nsape fun asiwere jo on asiwere, okan.

He who claps his hands for the fool to dance, is no better than the fool.

134.

Asiwere li o bi iya obbo.

The monkey's grandmother was a fool.

N.B.—This would be an insufferable insult to a Yoruba man.

135.

Asorin babba iggi.

The Asorin is the father of trees.

N.B.—“The Asorin,” says Mr. Bowen. “is a tree to which the natives ascribe the properties of the upas. Mr. Crowther remarks that it is “a very large tree. There is a superstition that as soon as any one begins to cut the Asorin, he is chased by the spirit that dwells in it. The woodman accordingly drops palm oil on the ground, that the spirit may lick it up whilst he makes his escape. This tree is worshipped at a distance.” The saying above quoted is merely superstitious.

136.

Asorin ko da osusu.

Asorin trees never form a grove.

137.

Asorin olodo.

The Asorin tree commands the brook.

138.

Aso lowo ko lekanna, enia ko si ni iballe.

Cloth has hands (i. e., *length, the measure used being hands or palms*) but no fingers: so a man (*has hands*) but no flowing train (*like the cloth*).

N.B.—This is said of one that covets his neighbour's goods.

139.

Ko ka iku ataba-susu ti ije larin asa.

Fearless of death, the pigeon feeds among the hawks.

N.B.—Said of a reckless man.

140.

Ni ijo ti ina ba jo ataba-susu ni ilo larin igbe, bi ina ba palo, elebu ama ire ebu.

When the bush is on fire, the pigeon removes from the grass-field: when the flame is extinguished, every one returns to his home.

N.B.—Said when, after a quarrel or an altercation, the contending parties part.

141.

Atampako ko se ijure okankan.

The thumb cannot point straight forwards.

N.B.—This is neat and expressive : it is said when quibbling or unfairness is detected. So we say, "Speak the truth and shame the devil."

142.

Agbasi mu atan gele.

Continual sweepings make a high rubbish-heap.

143.

Ate peiye mu eiye ku.

Bird-line is the death of a bird.

N.B.—Said of those who court danger or destruction.

144.

Atellesse ni ije egbin onna.

The sole of the foot is exposed to all the dirt of the road.

N.B.—Said of a leader, who is expected to put up with all manner of troubles.

145.

Atellewo ki itan' ni je.

The palm of the hand never deceives one.

N.B.—Our proverb is, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

146.

Oro atojomojo ko le isini li eti bi oro titton.

An old story does not open the ear as a new one does.

N.B.—We also have household words touching a twice-told tale.

147.

Ki Olorun ki o fu ni li atubotan rere.

May God give us a happy end!

N.B.—This is an expression manifestly borrowed from El Islam.

148.

Awiye ni Ife ifo gbangba li oro iperan.

(*As*) the Ife people (*the forefathers of the Yorubas*) speak without disguise, (*so*) a poisoned arrow kills an animal in the sight of all.

N.B.—Warns a prevaricator to speak the truth.

149.

Bi amba mbu Ettu ori ama ra Awo.

If you abuse the Ettu you make the Awo's head ache.

N.B.—The Ettu and Awo are varieties of Guinea fowl. The proverb means, that people feel acutely any reproach cast upon their relatives.

150.

Awodi nra ino aladire baje.*

When the hawk hovers (*over the yard*), the owner of the fowls feels uneasy.

N.B.—So Horace, "Nam tua res agitur murus quum proximus ardet."

* "Awodi" is a hawk, in Yoruba: the Somal call an eagle "Abodi."

151.

Li oju awodi ki ako adire re apatta.

No one would expose fowls on the top of a rock in the sight of a hawk.

N.B.—A warning to the imprudent.

152.

Awodi oloju ina.

The Awodi has eyes that can bear the fire.

153.

Mo kon igba lalle, mo kon igba li oro, mo kon igba li ossan ki mto fi ayindayinda lu u.

(*Says the Awoko, or mocking-bird*) I sing 200 songs in the morning, 200 at noon, and 200 in the afternoon (*as my ordinary task*), besides many frolicsome notes (*for my own amusement*).

N.B.—This is elliptical. The mocking bird has been accused of speaking evil of the king. He replies, "I may have done so without knowing it: did not I sing hundreds of songs," &c.? The saying is that of a man who is charged with slandering his neighbour, and who cannot deny it.

154.

Bi aba gbe aworan, aki isa ima fi, owo re te nkan.

However well an image be made, it must stand upon something.

N.B.—There must be a reason for everything : there is no smoke without fire.

155.

Eje awon ko kon ni li owo.

The blood of the land-tortoise (*or terrapin*) is not a handful.

156.

Ille osono a ya yo ta ni je ya ille awon ki awon.

One may call at the house of the generous and be filled: who will call at the house of a miser and salute him?

N.B.—Awon means both a land-tortoise and a miser.

157.

Ille awon ko gba awon, odedde awon ko gba olojo, awon ko ille oyo odde li ibadi.

The house of the land-tortoise is not large enough for itself; the verandah (i. e., *the carapace overlapping the tail*) will not accommodate a guest.

N.B.—The tortoise having built its house, makes the verandah behind it.

158.

Aya be sille o be si sille.

When a monkey jumps down from the tree, he jumps into the house (*of his pursuer*).

N.B.—Meaning, that he is sure to be caught. The proverb is applied to those who incur danger without reason.

159.

Ayan ko gba edon.

The Ayan-tree resists an axe.

N.B.—The Ayan is the tree of whose wood is made the club of Shango, god of thunder and lightning; and the saying means, “Do not undertake an unnecessary action.”

160.

Ayo ki ije ki aye e.

When the Ayo-game is won, it cannot be disputed.

N.B.—Ayo is the game called in Sierra Leone “Warry”: it is played with counters and a board with cups. The proverb is our “Fair play is a jewel.”

161.

Ayun ni mo ri nko ri abo.

I saw the departure, but not the return.

162.

Kun yun kun' wa bi iko era.

To be busy here and there, like the messenger of the ant.

N.B.—So the Hindus say, “Dhobi ka kutta, na ghar ka, na ghat ka”—a washerman's dog, neither in the house nor at the ghaut (*where linen is washed*). The proverb is applied to a “busy-body.”

163.

Baba bo, baba molle.

A great matter puts a smaller out of sight.

164.

Agba ko si illu baje, balle ku ille di shoro.

When there are no elders, the town is ruined; when the master dies, the house is desolate.

165.

Gangan ko ni saworo.

The Gangan (*war drum*) is destitute of bells (i. e., *ornaments*).

N.B.—Said sneeringly of the indolent, untidy, and badly dressed.

166.

Batta li a ifi ise agbura li arin egun.

With shoes one can get on in the midst of thorns.

N.B.—When confident in yourself you may confront difficulties.

167.

Bebbe ki o ri okose, sagbe ki ori awon.

Beg for help, and you will meet with rebuff: ask for alms, and you will meet with misers.

168.

Aki ida owo le ohun ti ako le igbe.

A thing which cannot be lifted (i. e., *accomplished*) should never be undertaken.

169.

Gudugudu kan li egbo kanrinkanrin.

The Gudugudu (*a poisonous wild yam*) is very acid at the root.

N.B.—Said of a difficult matter, a thing best left alone. So our common injunction, not to stir it, for fear of graveolent consequences.

170.

Obba ni igba owo bode.

It is the king who receives custom.

N.B.—Said to those who meddle with politics.

171.

Hohu! Iho ti ohu li esin akun u.

Eh! The grass field which grew up last year is burnt up.

N.B.—A play on the words Hohu (*expressing surprise*) and Iho (*a grass field burned every year by huntsmen*), which Mr. Crowther pronounces untranslatable. He thus, however, explained it to me. One man says, "Give me your reasons for this or that." The other answers by the proverb, meaning, "What is the use of your exclamation? If I had a thousand reasons I would not give you one—the matter is settled!"

172.

Ijo kan ojo o bori oda.

One day's rain makes up for many days' drought.

N.B.—A saying of many applications: in a good sense, of a generous man; or *vice versâ*, of severity after over-lenity; also inculcating earnestness of action—"Age quod agis."

173.

Otta enia ni iba oruko re je.

He is an enemy who slanders one's name.

N.B.—“ Who steals my purse steals trash,” &c. &c.

174.

Oro botiboti ko ye fun agbalagba.

Much talking is unbecoming in an elder.

175.

Bolla fun agba: awon ni babba enni.

Respect the elders: they are our fathers.

N.B.—We may remark, that whereas the Proverbs of Solomon dwell earnestly upon the respect and obedience due from children to their parents, the Yorubans are more careful to inculcate reverence for their elders. This is intimately connected with their system of politics.

176.

Om mode ki iwo s: so ni bujoko agba.

The younger should not intrude into the seat of the elders.

177.

Ati iran di iran babba wa ko bo iru orisa wonyi ri.

From one generation of our fathers to another, we never worshipped such a god as this.

N.B.—Said when a strange god is proposed. The Hindu saying is, “ The Adam of this place is a strange being.”

178.

Kokoro di labalaba.

The grub becomes a butterfly.

N.B.—Said sneeringly of a *parvenu*.

179.

Egbo ke, ina ke, ohun enia ke.

The sore is spreading; the fire is glowing; the throat is hoarse.

N.B.—There is here more of sound than sense, “ke” (*to grow worse*) being repeated in three several significations.

180.

O daju danu, o ko mo essan messan.

(*Though*) you (*seem*) very clever, you cannot tell 9 times 9.

N.B.—The Yorubas, from their practice of counting cowries, are generally good accountants.

181.

Dasa mu abbe ni iyin, enni nla li opon iye.

(*Though*) a small covered dish gives the stew a neat appearance, a bowl answers best for great men.

N.B.—Because it is larger.

182.

Dobballe ki apa igbonwo mo o ni 'hun ti ise fan ni.

To prostrate oneself and keep the elbows close, does something for one.

N.B.—Meaning, “booming” is sure to benefit a man; also inculcating modesty, that he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

183.

Ma se gba dulumo enni kan.

Do not receive a slander against any one to accuse him falsely.

N.B.—Meaning, do not slander any one. The saying is popular as a moral command.

184.

Enniti ase li ore ti ko dupe aba se e ni ibi ko don o.

He to whom kindness is shown and does not return thanks, if evil is done to him he will not feel that either.

N.B.—Meaning, that he is devoid of feeling.

185.

Ebi ko je ki apa owo mo, ebi mu ino se papala.

Hunger does not allow saving of money: hunger makes the body lean.

186.

Ore Agbe se li Offa odi egbe.

The good which Agbe did in Offa town is wasted.

N.B.—Agbe was a well-known Yoruban philanthropist: his good deeds were wasted, because the Offa people did not appreciate them. The proverb is applied to one unappreciated—undeveloped greatness.

187.

Egbon so mo ayinrin li ennu ani ki adire ki o wa iyan a je, adire mo pe ontikara on onje ayinrin.

A tick having fastened itself on the mouth of a fox, a fowl was desired to remove it; but the fowl well knew that she was food for the fox, as well as the tick (*was food*) for her.

188.

Ehoro ni ti Oloffa li o soro.

The Ehoro said, "I care for nobody but the archer."

N.B.—The Ehoro is a hare, or rabbit, whose fur is used by the Yorubas as a charm against fire. This saying is used to defy rivals or enemies.

189.

**Ejo ommo oniwere, bi o ti wu ki ase titi ako le
iba ejo re, iggi ni gbogbo araiye iyo si i.**

However much a snake may try, no one will be friendly to that child of writhing (i. e., *creeping thing*): on the contrary, all mankind will take up sticks to (*strike*) it.

N.B.—Said of a person or thing thoroughly "*antipatico*" to us. "I do not like you, Dr. Fell," &c.

190.

Eleke li eke iye, ohun ti aba se ni iye 'ni.

(*As*) anything which a man is (*in the habit of*) doing is natural to him, (*so*) a lie is natural to a liar.

N.B.—Habit is a second nature.

191.

Oruko ti aso ommo ni imo ommo li ara.

The name given to a child becomes natural to it.

192.

Agba metta ki isi ekulu ipe, bi okan pe ekulu, ekeji ani ekulu, eketta ani ekulu.

Three elders cannot all fail to pronounce (*the word*) **Ékulu**: one may say **Ekúlu**, another **Ekulu**, but the third will say **Ékulu**.

N.B.—The **Ekulu** is a species of deer, and the proverb means, "In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom."

193.

Alejo bi okete li a ifi ekuro ilo.

A stranger, like the ground-pig, is entertained with palm-nuts.

N.B.—Palm nuts are but poor fare.

194.

Ate yun ate wa li a ite ekuro oju onna.

To be trodden upon here, to be trodden upon there, is the fate of the palm-nut (*lying*) in the road.

195.

O fon mi li oron bi Ekuru.

He chokes me, like **Ekuru**.

N.B.—**Ekuru**, or **Kuduru**, is a very dry cake, made of the **Ere** or white bean. The above is said of a "bore."

196.

**Erin ntu ekuru, efon ntu ekuru, titu ekuru ajannaku
bo ti efon molle.**

The elephant makes a dust, and the buffalo makes a dust, but the dust of the buffalo is lost in that of the elephant.

197.

Ekute ille ko fi ibi aja ji han 'ra won.

The house-rat does not show its companion the hole in the ceiling (*into which it may fall*).

N.B.—The rat has escaped the danger, and leaves his friend to find it out. *Chacun pour soi.*

198.

Ekute ille ko ri ennuba ologbo wijo.

The domestic rat has no voice (i. e., *power*) to call the cat to account.

199.

Elubo se ogbodo ri, eru se ommo ni ille babba re.

(*As*) the Elubo was once a soft unripe yam, (*so*) the slave was once a child in his father's house.

N.B.—Elubo is prepared yam made into flour.

200.

Emirin nje 'ni ko ti nja.

The (*sting of the*) sand-fly is not so sharp as poverty.

201.

Ki emo ki o mo ni Ibese, ki omase de Ijanna.

Let the wonder stop at Ibese, and not proceed to Ijanna.

N.B.—Ibese and Ijanna, now destroyed, were two frontier towns at which travellers entering the Yoruba country successively paid tribute. Mr. Crowther explains it by "let the matter proceed no further." It somewhat suggests—

"De par le Roi ! défense à Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu."

It would also be applied, for instance, by the Abeokutans to the English at Lagos, wishing to force new manners and customs upon them.

202.

Bi iwo ko li owo o li ena, bi iwo ko li ena o li ohun rere li ennu.

If you have no money (*to give to one in distress*), you may pay frequent visits; if you cannot visit, you may send good words of the mouth (i. e., *kind messages*).

203.

Enitere ejitere li oja ifi ikon.

One here, two there, (*so*) the market is filled up.

N.B.—"Many a little makes a muckle."

204.

Enitere ejitere opo womu.

One here, two there, (*so gathers*) a vast multitude.

205.

Bi ino ibi ajanaku abi Era.

If the elephant can be angry, so can the Era (*a small black wood ant*).

206.

Enniti ko le igbe era, ti o nkusa si erin, yio te ara re.

He who cannot raise an ant, and yet tries to raise an elephant, shall find out his folly.

N.B.—Straining at gnats and swallowing camels.

207.

Ero ko jewo imota tan, bi o ba bi i, ali o ferì die.

The trader never confesses that he has sold all his goods; but when asked, he will (*only*) say, "Trade is a little better."

N.B.—So Proverbs xx. 14, "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer," &c.

208.

Enniti o da eru li eru ito.

Ashes fly back in the face of him that throws them.

N.B.—We say the same of curses.

209.

Owo li owo Ika, opo li opo Erun.

Order is the order of the Ika, multitude is the multitude of the Erun.

N.B.—Ikan is a white ant; Erun a general term for the ant tribe. The saying means, that the Ika works in ranks, whilst all others move in irregular swarms. This is said when disorder appears in an army, company, town, &c.

210.

Iyan ni imu, ni ije eso iggi ki iggi.

Famine compels one to eat the fruit of all kinds of trees.

N.B.—Trinculo says, "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows."

211.

Esinsin ko mo iku, jije ni ti re.

The fly heeds not death: eating is all to him.

212.

Esu ko ni iwa ako ille re si ita.

As the Rejected one has no (*kindliness of*) disposition, his house is made for him in the street (*by itself*).

N.B.—Esu (lit., *rejected*) is generally translated "devil," Satan.

213.

Ki esu ki o yin eiye, esu fo ni ijo kan soso iye re re.

The white ant may well admire the bird, for after flying one day it loses its wings.

N.B.—The *termes* assumes its perfect form about the beginning of the rains; after a few hours, however, it loses its wings, and falls an easy prey to man, birds, and reptiles.

214.

Ko si ohun ti o po to esu, bi o ba 'o ni ille a ba li oko.

There is nothing so numerous as the locusts: they meet you in the town and in the field.

N.B.—Somewhat like our "good folks are scarce;" but used in a deprecatory sense.

215.

Ete li egbon, ero li aburo, ogbon ino li o se eketta.

Consideration is the first born, calculation the next, wisdom the third.

N.B.—So we say, "Take heed will surely speed."

216.

Aimete aimero ni imu enia meffa isingba egbaffa.

Want of consideration and forethought made six brothers pawn themselves for six dollars.

217.

Eti, gbo ekeji ki o to dajo.

Hear, hear the other (*side of the question*) before you decide.

N.B.—The same as our *Audi alteram partem*.

218.

**Ewure je o re ille, agutan je ore ille, aje iwa ille
ba eledde je.**

When the goat has fed, it returns home ; when the sheep has fed, it returns home ; not returning home after feeding ruins (*the character of*) the pig.

N.B.—This saying means, that a man should leave the room when it is preferred to his company.

219.

**Ada ebo fun gunugun, o li on ko ru, ada ebo fun
Akalla o li on ko ru, ada ebo fu eiyelle, o gbe ebo
orubo.**

Sacrifice was prescribed to the turkey-buzzard, but it refused to offer it ; sacrifice was prescribed to the Akalla vulture, but it also refused : when sacrifices were prescribed to the pigeon, it offered them.

N.B.—This tradition explains to the Yoruba why the two former birds remained unclean, whilst the latter is domesticated, and used for sacrifice.

220.

Iwo ko ri akasu o npata si efo.

You have not yet obtained the loaf, and you began to prepare your stew.

221.

**Didon li o don li a nba ore je efo ti ille enni to ni
ije.**

Because (*friendship*) is pleasant, we partake of our

friend's entertainment; not because we have not enough
(*to eat*) in our own house.

N.B.—This saying is ever in the mouth of an Asiatic of the middle classes.

222.

Agbara to efon ma la iwo.

A man may be as strong as the buffalo, yet he has no horns.

223.

Egge ko so oki, enniti o bo si abbe re a pa a ku patapata.

The Egge-trap never fails, whatever comes under it is struck dead.

N.B.—Egge is the common African trap made with a bent tree.

224.

Enni egun gun ni ise lakalaka to alabbe.

He who is pierced with thorns must limp off to him who has a lancet.

225.

Asare nino egun ko se lassan, bi iwo ko le ojo, ojo li o nle 'a.

A man does not run among thorns for nothing; either he is chasing a snake or a snake is chasing him.

226.

Dagbese dagbese ti ipa apata eiyela.

He runs into debt who cuts up a pigeon to sell it in parts.

N.B.—He ruins himself who buys wholesale at a high price what he finds worthless in retail.

227.

Iku eja ni imu eja imo illu, eja Ogun iba se de Akessan.

It was the death of the fish that introduced it into the town; what else would have brought it from the Ogun River to the palace?

N.B.—Shows the effects of poverty, misfortune, and similar "judgments."

228.

Ohun gbogbo li adiyele, sugbon ko si enniti o mo iye ara ejje ara enni; ejje ko fi oju rere jade.

Every thing has its price; but who can set a price upon blood? Blood does not willingly leave the body.

N.B.—As the Asiatic proverb is, "Musk, love, and murder will out."

229.

Bi ekke otosi ko to oke li oro ato li alle.

If the poor man's rafter (i. e., *the plan proposed by a poor man for lengthening the rafter*) does not reach the top in the morning, it will reach it in the evening.

N.B.—A poor man is supposed to be looking on at the erection of a house, and recommends splicing two rafters together; his

advice is at first despised because he is poor, but is eventually adopted on the failure of all other plans. So Ecclesiastes ix. 16, "Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard."

230.

Akamo ekun o ni iyonnu.

It is difficult to encompass a leopard.

231.

Imado iba se bi eledde abilluje, eru iba jobba enia ko kun.

A wild boar, in place of a pig, would ravage the town; and a slave, made king, would spare nobody.

N.B.—Equivalent to our beggar on horseback. So Saadi somewhere says, "If a Derwaysh were to head the armies of El Islam, they would soon reach the ends of the world."

232.

Eleri ni iwajo, eleri ki ise elegbe.

A witness speaks the truth; a witness does not take (*the liar's*) part.

N.B.—Inculcates the virtue of truth in testimony, the people being "awful liars." Cf. Proverbs xiv. 5, "A faithful witness will not lie," &c.

233.

Ki Olorun ki ofu 'o li emmi gigun.

May the Lord of Heaven give you a long life!

N.B.—A popular form of blessing.

234.

Emmi abata ni imu odo isan.

The influence of a fountain makes the brook flow.

N.B.—Meaning, that by the aid of the great you may effect something great.

235.

Bi aba soro tan erin li a irin, bi aba yo tan orun 'ni ikon 'ni.

When a joke is uttered it creates laughter: when one has eaten to the full, he falls a-dozing.

N.B.—This is somewhat in “low-life,” and cuts many ways: it would always apply when a man has had a “belly-full” of a thing.

236.

Aki ipe e li eru ki ape e li oso.

What is (*really*) a load should not be called an ornament.

N.B.—Inculcates earnestness—Age quod agia.

237.

Ereke ni ille erin.

The jaw is the house of laughter.

N.B.—The jaw is here compared with a happy family.

238.

Mo so awo etta mo idi, o ki yi ota mi.

I have tied the leopard skin round my waist: you cannot sell me.

N.B.—Meaning, I have the protection of powerful friends: you cannot ruin me with law expenses.

239.

Asonmo di ette, okere ni idon.

Familiarity breeds contempt: distance secures respect.

240.

Eya oibo ni Fulani.

The Fula are a tribe from over the sea (*or white men*).

N.B.—An ethnological adage connecting Fulas with Europeans.

241.

Eyin ni idi akuko.

The egg becomes a cock.

242.

Ako le ifa 'ri lehin olori.

You cannot shave a man's head in his absence.

N.B.—You cannot settle a matter unless those concerned in it are present.

243.

Okete ni ojo gbogbo li on mo, on ko mo ojo miran.

The Okete says, "I understand (*what you mean by*) a specified day, (*but*) another day I do not understand."

N.B.—The Okete is a large rat that eats palm-nuts, and is therefore dedicated to Ifa. The saying applies to an undecided man: it also implies a suspicion, "You should explain your intentions."

244.

Arin fa li oju akegan, ayan kasa li oju abu 'ni, abu 'ni ko li okowo ni ille.

A man walks at his ease in the presence of his abuser ; a man steps proudly in the presence of his abuser ; (*when he knows that*) the abuser has not twenty cowries in his house.

245.

Fadaka babba oje, wura babba ide.

Silver is the father of lead ; gold is the father of brass.

N.B.—The alchemists invert these propositions. The Yoruba word for silver is Fadaka, evidently the Arabic fizeh, which shows the metal not to have been indigenous. On the other hand, "Wura," gold, is a vernacular word. The saying means, that one thing is better than another.

246.

Bi nwon ko ba fe o ni iso nwon fati si apakan.

If they do not want you in their company, go aside.

N.B.—The Yorubas are naturally intrusive, and are not to be expelled a room by hints ; these truisms of advice are therefore necessary for them.

247.

Ipon ri iku o feribo o.

The spoon seeing death, ventures its head into it (i. e., *is not afraid of scalding water*).

N.B.—Said of a dare-devil, one who runs his head against a wall.

248.

Fiyesi ohun ti o nse.

Mind what you are doing.

N.B.—So we say, “Moyennant l'activité on fait beaucoup avec peu de peine.”

249.

Gbogbo agba mo беру nyin, illu mo беру nyin, Oyo misi mo беру nyin.

I present my fear (i. e., *my respects*) to the elders in general; I present my respects to the whole town; I present my respects to all the leading elders of Oyo.

N.B.—A complimentary saying addressed to the elders of Oyo.

250.

Aki igbelle ki ama fohun si 'ra enni.

We cannot dwell in a house together without speaking one to another.

N.B.—Inculcates mutual dependence.

251.

Enni ti fonnu po ko le ise nkan.

He who boasts much can do very little.

N.B.—“Chien qui aboie ne mord pas.”

252.

Bi ati rin li ako 'ni.

As one is walking, so is he met.

N.B.—Meaning, that the world takes you at your own valuation.

253.

O nfura bi elefo Tette.

He is as suspicious as the seller of the herb Tette.

N.B.—The vendor of Tette (a common herb picked up everywhere) is a low fellow: if you ask him, "What are you selling?" he at once suspects sinister intentions. These trade-illustrations are common. So the French say, "Il ment comme un arracheur de dents."

254.

Mase gba enniti o yo obbe mu.

Do not lay hold of a man who has a drawn knife.

255.

Ekute ille ni ti enniti o pa on ko don on to ti enniti o gbe on sanle.

The house-rat said, "I do not feel so much offended with the man who killed me, as with him who dashed me on the ground afterwards."

N.B.—This is our "Adding insult to injury."

256.

Ohun elege ki igbe ibaje.

A delicate thing is not difficult to be injured.

257.

Bi ake iggi ni igbo gbohunbohun agba a.

When a tree is cut in the forest, the echo repeats the sound.

N.B.—Said of actions done by noteworthy men.

258.

Enniti o gbon ju 'ni lo ni ite 'ni ni Ifa.

(*The priest*) who is more crafty than another, induces him to adopt the worship of Ifa.

259.

Gudugudu ko se ibe elubo.

The Gudugudu (*a poisonous wild yam*) will not do to be made into flour.

260.

ibaje isu ni ibaje obbe: enniti o se ibaje enia, o se ibaje enia, o se ibaje ara re.

The badness of the yam is (*laid to*) the badness of the knife: (*but it is soon found out that the yam is in fault; so*) he who injures another injures himself.

261.

O ni ika nino bi ibaka.

He is as stubborn as a mule.

262.

Salala babba ibante.

The Salala (*a superior stuff*) is the father (i. e., *the best*) of aprons.

N.B.—A compliment.

263.

Ibere ki ije ki enni ki o sinna. Enni ti ko le ibere
li o npon 'ra re li oju.

Inquiry saves a man from mistakes. He who makes no
inquiry, gets himself into trouble.

264.

O ha mora bi ibepe.

He encumbers himself like the papaw (*when laden with
fruit.*)

265.

Enia ki ise 'ni ni rere ki afi ibi su u.

He who has done you a kindness should never be ill-
used.

266.

Ibino ko se nkan fu' ni suru babba iwa. Ibino ni
iyo offa li apo, ohun rere ni iyo obi li apo.

Anger does nobody good: patience is the father of
dispositions. Anger draws arrows from the quiver: good
words draw Kola nuts (i.e., *presents*) from the bag.

N.B.—So the Hindi saying, "Associate with the good, and eat
Pan: associate with the bad, and lose your nose and ears."

267.

Ibon ko soro ira bi etu, ijo kan li ara ibon igba
gbogbo li ara etu, etu ko si ibon di opa.

A gun is not so hard to buy as powder: a gun is
bought one day (i. e., *once for all*)—powder must be

bought again and again. Without powder a gun is nothing but a rod.

N.B.—When you undertake a matter that will ever want something, you must look to your ability to keep up the expense.

268.

Ibubu li atu Okun, ododo li atu Ossa, ibi ti a ba li atu Oyan.

Along shore you must navigate the ocean: down channel you must navigate the Ossa: where you please you may navigate the Oyan.

N.B.—The Ossa is the lagoon between Lagos and Badagry. The Oyan is a small stream running into the Ogun or Abeokuta river. The saying is a kind of lesson in matters maritime.

269.

Ibukon ille, ibukon oja ki o ba o.

May the increase of the house and the increase of the market befall you!

N.B.—A popular blessing in the mouth of priest and priestess.

270.

Idi babba eiye, idi babba akosa.

The eagle is the prince of fowls: the eagle is the prince of birds of prey.

N.B.—A compliment.

271.

So idi re fun mi.

Tell me the rump of it (i. e., *the reason*).

272.

Ifa nla ni iya oluwa re li apo.

Inordinate gain makes a hole in the pocket.

N.B.—Haggai i. 6, "Ye have sown much, and bring in little," &c.

273.

Bi ife fo ou li amo li akko eiye.

The life is noted by its flight as the bravest of birds.

N.B.—A compliment. The life is a small bird with bright plume.

274.

Apadi ni isaju ifonna.

The potsherd (*on which live coals are carried*) goes in front of him who has taken the fire from the hearth with it.

N.B.—The potsherd is an emblem of courage, because it stands fire, and the proverb means that a hazardous enterprise requires a bold leader.

275.

Igba li apa akipa awo.

A calabash may be cut into halves, but not an earthen pot.

N.B.—Said of a thing which does not commonly occur : *this we have been accustomed to do, that not.*

276.

Aka Igba ta o nawo iku.

He who gathers Igba-fruit spends the money of death (i. e., *money which he has risked his life to get*).

N.B.—The Igba is a kind of locust-tree (acacia), whose wood is very brittle. So the gathering of locust fruit is called *ikujare* (iku-je-are), "death is right," or "may be justified."

277.

Igbako sanno, eleko ko sanno, igbako iba si, awamu eleko ko je.

The spoon is liberal, the pap-seller is not: the spoon would have given plenty, the stingy pap-seller would not let it.

N.B.—A taunt to the miserly.

278.

Enia lanan po o ju igbe enni rere won o ju oju lo.

Ordinary people are as common as grass, but good people are dearer than an eye.

N.B.—So we say, Good folks are scarce.

279.

Igbin ko mo ije ato okowo.

Had the snail not known where to feed in safety, it would never have grown so large as to be worth twenty cowries.

280.

Bi igbin ba nfa kawon re ate le e.

When the snail crawls, its shell accompanies it.

N.B.—Meaning, that if the chief sets out the tail will follow him.

281.

Bi ati yin awon li ayin igbin.

As the tortoise meets with due regard, so should the snail.

282.

Je igbo, je ito.

May you eat old age and longevity.

N.B.—Meaning, **May** you enjoy many days.

283.

Igbo wa ille eiyekeiyo tu.

The Igbo searches the nests of other birds to plunder them.

N.B.—The Igbo is a bird that feeds on the eggs of other birds. It is the cuckoo of Yoruba sayings.

284.

Oran ko ba ojugon o li on ko li eran.

When the skin is not hurt, it says that it has no flesh (*to protect it*).

N.B.—Meaning, that when circumstances do not call forth a man's resources, he is apt to think he has none.

285.

Igun ti ogun mi ko jo ti egun.

Piercing (*me with a lance*) is not like pricking me with a thorn.

286.

Igun iyan ko jo ti elubo, mimu ni iyan imu kiku li elubo iku.

The pounding of Iyan is not like the pounding of Elubo : Iyan becomes more adhesive, Elubo separates into powder.

N.B.—Iyan is yam-paste, Elubo yam-flour.

287.

Emi ko ri aye wolle nitori ihagaga.

I have no room to go into the house, because of the crowd.

288.

Ihalle ba oso enia je.

Poverty destroys a man's reputation.

289.

Li ennu onihin ni ihin idon.

News is interesting from the mouth of him who tells it first.

290.

Iho odo o bo iho ijo enia melle.

The noise of the river drowns the noise of the people.

291.

Enni ti o nsure kiri ni papa on li o wa nino ewu ati ji si iho.

He who runs about the fields is in danger of falling into a pit.

292.

Ti ossan ti oru iho imo ko gbe ille li aise, bi o ba dake aje pe o pin.

Day and night the nostril is always at work: when it stops (*life*) is at an end.

293.

Ija ni ije pe illu npe 'o gbogbo won li o ni oruko.

Every one in the assembly has a name; but when you are summoned "in the name of the assembly" (*not in the name of some member of it, you may be sure that*) evil awaits you.

294.

Ija ko bimmo ki o ro.

Strife never begets a gentle child.

N.B.—*Tristes ut ira.*

295.

Awa ko ri ese he, ijadan li ansa kiri labbe iggi.

We had no shea-butter nuts to gather: we were obliged to seek about to pick up the remnants eaten by the bats.

296.

Bi aba ndije ni bi ise owo ama ya ni.

When we compete in working, our hands quicken (i.e., *we work faster*).

297.

Ijo ni ti illu, Obba li o li agbo.

The public assembly belongs to the town: a select council belongs to the Obba (*king*).

298.

Ika ko je se ommo re behe.

The wicked man would not treat his own child (*as he treats others*).

299.

Ikan nje ille agba nsoro agba na ti ikan ti ikan.

The white ants are destroying a house: the old man (*who owns it*) complains. The old man himself will (*soon*) be the white ants' food.

300.

Olori buburu ki ire oko Ikan bi oba re oko ikan Ila ni ika wa ille.

An unlucky man should never go to gather the Ikan: he will surely bring home the Ila instead.

N.B.—The Ikan is the brinjall or egg-plant: the Ila is the Okro (ocero) or edible Hibiscus.

301.

Ma fi ikanju jaiye, aiye mi ehin li o po jojo.

Be not in (*too great*) a hurry to enjoy the world: you have life enough before you yet.

302.

Enniti aba ni ikara li o li ateteba.

Whoso owns the inner square, owns the outer.

303.

Iwo le ije obi o ise ikki bi?

You are always eating Kola-nuts. Are you an Ikki?

N.B.—The Ikki is a small animal, supposed to live on Kola nuts.

304.

Ojo pa odide aluko nyo, aluko se bi ikko baje ojo
mu ikko woso.

(*When*) the rain beat upon the parrot, the woodpecker
rejoiced, thinking that his (*rival's*) red tail was spoiled;
but the rain only increased its beauty.

305.

Iko ekuru ewo Ife, aja ki igbo ni iboji ekun.

(*As*) carrying dust is forbidden in Ife, (*so*) no dog
dares to bark near the leopard's lair.

306.

Agbara odo ko jo agbara ikoko, bi agbe odo ka ina
ajo, bi asi gun iyan ni ikoko alu.

The strength of a wooden mortar is not like the strength
of an earthen pot. Place a mortar on the fire, and it will
burn; pound a yam in a pot, and it will break through
(*the bottom*).

307.

Oniko ko sa lumo.

A man with a cough cannot conceal himself.

308.

Ikoko aiye ya ju ikoko ti orun lo.

A corner in the world (*of sense*) is better than a corner
in the world of spirits.

N.B.—A sentiment familiar to the Oriental poets. *Carpe
diem*, &c.

309.

Ikudu pa esin e 'nyo o mbowa ipa ommo enia.

When your neighbour's horse falls into a pit, you should not rejoice at it, for (*your own*) child may fall into it too.

310.

Ikun babba orisa.

The belly is the father of the gods.

N.B.—So Rabelais of the Great Gaster. In the Persian *Al-nameh* we find, *ال خدا خوان ديغا* "God is a tray of plunder."

311.

Eko ila gba ara re lowo obbe Ila ti akokiki ko so, gboro ti akokiki ko fa, ommo ife mi ti mo gbekke le ko se bi mo ti ro.

The Okro vegetable, which was so celebrated, does not bear fruit; the pumpkin, which was so celebrated, does not trail: the beloved child, of whom I expected so much, does not answer my hopes.

312.

Ilaja ni igba ogbe.

A peace-maker (*often*) receives wounds.

N.B.—For which reason it is presumed he is "blessed."

313.

Iwo ni ille ode, Ibara ni ille awodi, ati ipe ille aganran?

Iwo is the abode of the parrot, Ibara is the land of the hawk, but where is the territory of the green parrot?

N.B.—Iwo may also mean the flocking together of carnivorous birds, which is regarded as an intimation of a recent or an impending war in the neighbourhood, and Ibara their migration. So the people say, "Awodi loh Ibara"—the hawks are gone to Ibara. The proverb is applied to a stranger who wishes to pass himself off as a man of consequence.

314.

Illeke-opolo ko yin ole li oju.

Frogs' spawn attracts not the robber's eye.

N.B.—Frogs' spawn is supposed to resemble beads.

315.

Iloro li awo ki ato wolle.

One must go through the porch before entering the square.

316.

Bi ankilo fun 'o, fi okilo fun 'ra re.

When you are warned, warn yourself.

317.

Akanse li offa imado jagan oro ki ipa aso.

Arrows for the wild boar must be made to order: a common poisoned arrow will not kill that savage (*animal*).

318.

Bi o ti wu' ni li ase Imalle enni o fi apa eledde je sari.

Any one may practise his Moslem worship as it is most convenient: he may breakfast off a pig's foot.

319.

Imolle ko gboddo tan ara wonje, imo ennikan ko yan.

Covenant makers should not deceive one another; (*for*) one man's counsel is not sufficient.

320.

Afinju ni ijiwo, imoran ni ije obi marimaje ni ije ahusa.

A man of fashion eats the Iwo, a wise man the Kola nut; a man of vulgar tastes eats the Ahusa.

N.B.—The Iwo is a bitter fruit: the Ahusa is an esculent nut.

321.

Imunmuna abi idi sembe sembe, imunmuna ko dana ri, ti ina ti ina ni mba ikiri.

Though the glow-worm never kindles a fire, yet it travels with glowing fire at its tail.

322.

Ina njo ogiri ko sa ama gba gere gere si omi.

Though the fire is burning, the walls do not shrink from it, and yet the fire is trying to consume the water.

N.B.—Said of those who aim at the greater, when they cannot accomplish the less.

323.

Oyibo babba inaja, aje babba teni teni.

The white man is the father of merchants : (*want of*)
money is the father of disgrace.

324.

Aki ifi oran ipapa lo eja, aki ifi oran odo ilo afe.

No one should ask the fish what happens in the plain ;
nor should the rat be asked what takes place in the water.

N.B.—Ne sutor ultra crepidam.

325.

Ipeta li ose apon.

The ipeta is the bachelor's soap.

N.B.—Ipeta is the name of a tree whose root is used for
washing and for bleaching cloth.

326.

Irawo san san san alommo lehin bi osupa.

Twinkling, twinkling, twinkling stars, like so many
chickens behind the moon.

N.B.—Said of the headman or leader of a host.

327.

**Ire ki li orisa se fun abuke ti obi ommo ti o so o
li Orisagbemi?**

What good have the gods done to the hunchback, that
he should name his child Orisagbemi? (i. e., *the gods
have blessed me.*)

N.B.—Meaning, why should I acknowledge kindness when I
have only experienced evil?

328.

Ireke ni iwa ju esu, adu iggi ki ise omi si 'ni li ennu.

The sugar-cane has a better quality than the bulrush : there are not many plants (lit., *trees*) which can supply the mouth with such sap.

329.

Oni li egbon olla, iri wowo ni ise egbon ojo.

To-day is the elder brother of to-morrow, and a copious dew is the elder brother of the rain.

330.

Awí ki aje Iro ki oro 'ni o si nfon 'ni li oron.

The Iro was presented to us as something which might readily be swallowed, and, instead of that, it chokes us.

331.

Iroju li ohun gbogbo.

Perseverance is everything.

N.B.—With us it accomplishes great things—"Labor improbus omnia vincit."

332.

Iru esin ki ipe idi iru enia, bi esin ku afi iru si aiye.

The horse's tail soon becomes the man's tail ; for when the horse dies he leaves his tail behind him.

N.B.—Property often changes hands

333.

Opo Iru ko ba obbe je.

Plenty of Iru does not spoil the stew.

N.B.—Iru is the seed of the locust-fruit, used as a seasoning. The proverb means, "Good advice never harms, however much be offered,"—somewhat opposed to our "Too many cooks spoil the broth."

334.

Isansa ko yan egun, isansa ko ikawo obbe.

A fugitive never stops to pick the thorns from his foot ; the fugitive makes no choice of his sauce.

335.

Aki ire ni ison lo ida ai ibu.

No one should draw water from the spring to feed the abyss.

N.B.—No poor man should deprive himself of his small property to make presents to the rich.

336.

Iya ni ti ommori isasun iya nje didon omme nje oru.

The pot-lid is always badly off: the pot gets all the sweet, the lid nothing but steam.

N.B.—Said of slaves who work without remuneration.

337.

Onise ki ifi ise re sille re ebi.

Wherever a man goes to dwell, his character goes with him.

338.

Ise ko mu okko laya ki o ma ran ommo, asise ki ili ara.

Poverty never visits a husband without visiting his children: a poor man has no relatives.

339.

Isowo mbe li orun nawonawo mbe ni iboji.

The labourer is always in the sun: the landowner is always in the shade.

N.B.—Meaning, that one toils whilst the other reaps the fruit.

340.

Isoran ni ise ajo.

The evil-doer is ever anxious.

341.

Itta metta ko konno ebo.

The junction of the road does not dread sacrifices.

N.B.—Sacrifices to avert impending evil are always exposed in a place where several ways meet.

342.

Itadogun li ajo Egba.

A round of seventeen days is the meeting of the Egbas.

N.B.—There are many "savings' clubs" amongst the Egbas. The members meet to deposit their Esu or contributions at certain intervals, usually every fifth or market day. Each member in turn takes the whole of the sum contributed on a single day, until the rotation is completed. Those who come first on the roster secure

in this way a larger capital to dispose of than they would otherwise have been able to command; and the members whose turn comes late, by contributing to the common stock have saved the sums which they would otherwise have expended on trifles. The markets occur every fifth day; from one market day to the fourth succeeding, the first and last both inclusive, the interval is seventeen days: hence the proverb. The day on which the payment is made is reckoned a second time as the commencement of a new series. Even at S'a Leone, the Egbas keep up this system.

343.

Bi iti ko wo owo ki iba isepe.

Unless the tree falls, one will never get at the branches.

N.B.—Meaning, that if you cannot reach the chief you never will manage his men.

344.

Bi o ba tiju o tii fu ra re.

If you are modest, you are modest to your own advantage.

345.

Iwa ni ijo oniwa loju.

Every man's character is good in his own eyes.

346.

Iwo ologbon ko jo ti asiwere.

The appearance of the wise differs from that of the fool.

N.B.—All things are not equal.

347.

Ise ko don iya ko fohun ki amo enniti iya ndon li ara.

Calamity has no voice: suffering cannot speak to tell who is really in distress (*and who is complaining without cause*).

N.B.—It is hard to say who is the real sufferer, great calamity being mostly dumb.

348.

Awodi lo ire iye nwon li eiye si lo.

The hawks go away for the moulting season, and (*the ignorant*) suppose that these birds are gone for ever.

N.B.—Said, for instance, at the departure of an unpopular governor, when people prophesy from their wishes, yet prove false prophets.

349.

O jebbi oran won.

He was guilty in the matter and then sat in a corner.

350.

Ohun ti atejumo ki ijona.

If you attend to what is roasting, it will not be burnt.

N.B.—Meaning, do the thing with all thy might.

351.

Enyi ni ki ama taffa, ki ni ki afi le Ogun? Kana-kana li ofi le Boko.

"You say we should not shoot arrows; with what, then, shall we repel the enemy?"

"'Twas with a Kanakana (*a sling*) that one of old repelled the Boko people," replied the other.

N.B.—A proverbial style of discomfiting an objection.

352.

Kanakana eyi ti nre Ibara ni; efufu ta a ni idi pa, oni ise kuku ya.

The crow was going to Ibara; a breeze sprung up behind: "That will help me on famously," quoth the crow.

353.

Enia kan ni iro kangara bo ni li owo.

One man makes bill-hooks to put into the hands of others.

N.B.—Meaning, that every man has his particular trait.

354.

Kanhunl i ommo Hausa, asara li ommo Oyibo, gombo li ommo Onire.

Rock-salt is the produce of Hausa; tobacco is the produce of the Oyibo (*European*); the spoon (*with which the mixture of rock-salt and tobacco is retailed*) is the produce of the chief of Ire.

N.B.—Means, that everything is in its own place. It is amongst the "wise sayings."

355.

Kantikanti ko li oran akeregbe li oron.

The gnats have no quarrel with the calabash.

N.B.—Meaning, that they swarm about it only for the sweet liquor which it contains. It is also said to a bystander who interferes in a dispute which does not concern him.

356.

Ohun Kegio ko de orun.

The voice of the Kegio does not reach the sky.

N.B.—The Kegio is a bird so called from its cry. The saying is applied to one whose voice has not much weight.

357.

Akuko nla ko je ni kekere ki o ko.

A large cock does not suffer a small one to crow.

N.B.—Said when a superior is in office.

358.

Ake ommo bi oju.

He indulges the child as (*if it were*) an eye.

N.B.—Said of an over-fond parent.

359.

Kelleku tan okun je, ki ije behe, okun re don.

(*The printed pattern of*) the calico deceives the country cloth (*which is usually dyed to conceal flaws or coarse texture*); (*the calico*) is not in reality what (*the country*

cloth) takes it to be; (*for whilst the fact of its being dyed makes it seem coarse*), the thread is (*found on investigation to be*) fine.

N.B.—Meaning, that further acquaintance often corrects first impressions.

360.

Ma se ba mi sire ti kere ifi igba okun li oron.

Do not play me the trick by which the fool gets a rope round his neck.

N.B.—Do not be treacherous.

361.

Enniti ko ki 'ni abo, o pa adano e 'ku ille.

Whoso does not salute (*his friend*) on returning from a journey, forfeits the salutation (*usually offered*) to him who has remained at home.

362.

Ki aga, ki ago, ede ara wa li ako gbo.

We may talk this and talk that (i. e., *we may express different opinions, but*) it is because we do not understand one another.

N.B.—Said during arguments.

363.

Kinniu di elewon ki erankoki, ki oma iso je, kinniu ko je eran ikasi. Bi yio ba don ani, bikose erin, bi-ko-se enia, bikose ohun dudu. on ko beru annikan.

The lion is the pet of the forest: let every beast take heed how he feeds, for the lion does not eat stale meat.

When he roars, he says, "Except the elephant, except man, except the black thing, I fear nobody."

N.B.—The lion, unknown in Southern, is common in Northern Yoruba. The black thing may be the Naki, which some suppose to be the gorilla. Mr. Crowther unsatisfactorily translates it "urantan." The proverb is applied to a great man and his rivals.

364.

Kokoro jiwo jiwo, kokoro jobi jobi lara Obi li o wa, enniti nseni ko gbon 'ni lo.

(*As*) the grubs eating the Iwo, and the grubs eating the Obi, lodge within the Iwo and the Obi; so he that betrays you is not far from your person.

N.B.—The Ibo is a tree whose fruit is called the "bitter Kola." The Ibi is the esculent Kola. The proverb means, that the enemy inside the camp is the most dangerous.

365.

Ako rira ko ni nkan odun ko sian sokoto.

As the envious man has nothing (i. e., *is unfit for society*), so grass matting is unfit for trowsers.

366.

Enia lassan ko ni kobbi olowo ko ni ilari.

As no (*subject, however*) rich, may possess a herald, so it is not every man that may possess a palace.

N.B.—The herald is a royal privilege. The word Kobbi here translated palace, means properly, the tall gables of the regal roof; hence, by synecdoche, a palace. The proverb alludes to the species of divinity popularly supposed (in the East) to hedge in kings.

367.

Obba koju buburu si awon olotte.

The king regards rebels with an evil eye.

N.B.—Said to the mutinous and disobedient

368.

Kolokolo iba ku adire ko sokun; kolokolo ko gba adire sin.

When the fox dies, the fowls never mourn; for the fox never rears a chicken.

369.

Konkosso ko da ku elubo.

The sieve never sifts flour by itself (*without some one to hold it*).

N.B.—Means, that first will not act without second causes.

370.

Mo kugbe li ehoro idon li oko, mo mu owo ra li aparo idon li abba baba.

“I am perishing!” cries the hare in the field: “I am a spendthrift!” is the cry of the partridge on the barn-top.

N.B.—There is more of sound than sense in this proverb, which is, however, applicable to ruined fortunes.

371.

Kutukutu ki iji 'ni li erin meji, kutukutu ni ije owuro, biri ni ije alle.

The dawn cometh not twice to wake a man: the dawn is the earliest part of the day (i. e., *time to begin work*); (*with*) the evening twilight comes the night.

N.B.—So our saying, Early to bed and early to rise, &c.

372.

Lakari babba iwa, bi o ni surn ohun gbogbo li o ni.

Patience is the best of dispositions: he who possesses patience, possesses all things.

N.B.—Patience and time run through the roughest day.

373.

Bi apeja tan, lebbe eja ni iha eji li ennu.

When a fish is killed, its tail is inserted into its own mouth.

N.B.—Applied to those who reap the fruits of their own misdeeds.

374.

Bi ina ba jo oko majala afo wa ille.

When fire burns in the fields, the flakes fly to the town.

N.B.—*Nam tua res agitur murus quum proximus ardet.*

375.

Mimu orun ko jo mimu abbe.

The keen heat of the sun is not like the keenness of a razor.

N.B.—Compares great things with small, inferiors with superiors.

376.

Modumodu babba ejje.

Marrow is the father of blood.

N.B.—A compliment.

377.

Mottimotti ko mo agbe ji, omotti gbagbe ise ijaba.

The drunkard cannot drink a hole in a calabash, though he may drink so as to forget his trouble.

N.B.—Sneering at those who mix strong liquor.

378.

Enniti a mba inaja li awo aki iwo ariwo oja.

You must attend to your business with the vendor in the market, and not to the noise of the market.

N.B.—Be earnest.

379.

Niw aju li ati ijogun ehin li ati ise agba.

A man may be born to a heritage, but wisdom comes only with length of days.

380.

Ommo ki ino bi eranko.

A child cannot be lost like a beast.

N.B.—Shows the superiority of man over other animals.

381.

Obu ko to iyo.

Obu (*or salt earth*) is not to be compared with real salt.

N.B.—Said to a pretender.

382.

Bi ako ri adan aṣi ode sebo.

If you cannot obtain a large bat for sacrifice, a small one will do instead.

N.B.—One must take the will for the deed.

383.

Bi ino ko li odi, odi ani ino.

If the mind (i. e., *a man*) is not malicious, some one will be malicious against him.

N.B.—All men must have enemies.

384.

Odo gbe ma gbe oruko.

The stream may dry up, but the water-course retains its name.

385.

Enniti o wo odo li onno nko aiya ko fo odo.

He who enters a ruin may fear, but the ruin fears not.

N.B.—One who attacks another is often timid before the attack.

386.

**Iya odo on ommo re ko ni ija, agbe li o dija sille
fun won : ommo odo ki ina iya re lassan.**

The pestle and the mortar had no quarrel between them, it was the farmer that caused the quarrel (*by supplying the yam for pounding*): the child of the mortar (i. e., *the pestle*) does not beat its mother for nothing.

N.B.—Said of a person or a thing that causes disputes.

387.

Bi iwo oku iwo a la odo ya 'na.

If you are going to die, need you split up the mortar for firewood?

N.B.—Better leave it to the survivors. Opposed to the European phrase, "Après nous le déluge."

388.

Odu ki ise aimo oloko.

The Odu herb (*a vegetable used as cabbage*) is not unknown to the farmer.

N.B.—Said of any self-evident thing, a truism, &c.

389.

Agbede bi ofe, amo ara ire bi odide; adebo fun ofe, ofe ko ru aganran gbe ebo o rubo, asinwa asinbo ofe di ara Oyo aganran di ara oko: nwon se bi ofe ko gbon.

Sacrifice being prescribed to the parrot, he refused to offer it, but the green parrot took the sacrifice and offered it; after all, the parrot is a citizen of the capital, and the green parrot is an inhabitant of the province: (*and yet people*) thought that the parrot was not wise.

N.B.—The green parrot is counted a clean bird, and offered in sacrifice, while the parrot is unclean, and never molested. The saying is one of those sneers at religion, much affected by Africans, Hindoos, Chinese, and idolaters generally; but not by any means proving that they are disposed to change.

390.

Odudua igba nla meji ade isi.

Heaven and earth are two large calabashes, which, being shut, can never be opened.

N.B.—Odua and Odudua may mean either heaven and earth, or the supreme goddess of the world, who came from Ife. The saying alludes to the concavity of the sky which seems to touch the earth at the horizon.

391.

Ase ofofo ko gba egba ni ibi ope li o mo; ofofo li egbon ororo li aburo.

A tale-bearer receives not 2000 cowries (i. e., *no payment*); thanks are all his reward. Tale-bearing is the elder brother; bitterness is the younger.

392.

Ennu oforo ni ipa oforo, oforo bi ommo meji o ko won wa eti onna oni, Ommo mi ye korokoro, korokoro, korokoro.

It was the squirrel's own mouth that betrayed her; for when she had brought forth two young ones, she carried them to the roadside, and said, "My children are very sound, very sound, very sound!"

N.B.—Korokoro is an onomatoplasun, imitating the squirrel's cry.

393.

Ofurufu ko se ifeihin ti.

One cannot lean upon emptiness.

N.B.—One cannot do impossibilities.

394.

Ogbo ko li ogun.

There is no medicine against old age.

395.

Bi Ogboya ba fi iru na ille li erimnetta ni illu, illu na atu.

When the Ogboya strikes its tail thrice on the ground in any town, that town will be deserted.

N.B.—A popular superstition: the Ogboya is an animal about the size of a cat.

396.

Ogedemgbe iro ki ida ni si iyewu gbangba ni ida ni si.

The headlong fall of a liar is not concealed, but is exposed to view.

397.

Apon di Ogi o saro.

When a man becomes an old bachelor, he makes his own fire-place (i. e., *he must cook his own food*).

N.B.—Ogi means an old dog, or an old bachelor.

398.

Ogidigbo pari ilu gbogbo; bi owe bi owe li alu Ogidigbo: enniti o ye ni ijo o—Gbo, Ajagbo, gbo, obba gbo, ki emi ki osi gbo.

The Ogidigbo is the best of all drums; the Ogidigbo has a meaning in its sound: he who understands the sound can dance to it—"May you be old, King Ajagbo! may you be old, may the king be old, may I also be old!"

N.B.—This is said of one who can talk eloquently, and quote many proverbs.

399.

Ileri ille ko mo ajagun, kufekufe ko mo ija: ijo ti ari ogun li amo ogo.

Boasting at home is not valour, parade is not battle: when war is seen, the valiant will be known.

N.B.—So the Arabs say, "Character is shown in travel, bravery in the battle."

400.

Ogongo babba eiye.

The ostrich is the father of birds.

N.B.—A compliment.

401.

Ija ni ipa onitiju ogun ni ipa alagbara.

As a street-quarrel will prove fatal to a bashful man (i. e., *a man who fears to be thought a coward*), so will war kill a man renowned for valour.

402.

**Gegele li o bi gegele koto li o bi koto, ojo ro si koto
gegele nroju.**

Bank rises after bank, and ditch follows ditch: when the rain falls into the ditch, the banks are envious.

N.B.—This is said to those not satisfied with their position in life.

403.

Ojowu ko li eran li aiya iba jowu ko yo.

A jealous woman has no flesh upon her breast (i. e., *is always thin*); for, however much she may feed upon jealousy, she will never have enough.

404.

Oju babba ara: awon bi oju, asoro ida bi agba.

The eye is the father of the body: as the eye is too dear to be purchased, so it is hard to act well an elder's part.

405.

Ojugon mu odo fohun.

The leg (*of the wader*) makes the brook resound.

N.B.—Said of one who speaks well, who makes an impression upon his hearers.

406.

Ojumo mo o nyo ojo iku ndi?

When the day dawns, you rejoice: do you not know that the day of death is so much the nearer?

407.

Oju-orun ko huko, illepa ko je ki oku ki o be onna wo.

As the grass cannot grow in the sky, so the dead cannot look out of the grave into the road.

408.

Okele gbomgbo fe ommo li oju.

A large morsel chokes a child.

N.B.—Said of overgreed and ambition.

409.

Okete babba ogun: bi asigun olukuluku ni odi okete lowo.

A store of food is the best equipment for war: when war is proclaimed, every man takes up his wallet.

410.

Gbogbo wa li ajumo fi Okete san ogoffa: nighbati Okete ofi di ogoje, oju gbogbo wa ni yio si se.

We all agreed to value the Okete-rat at 140 cowries (*its usual price*): when 20 cowries are to be added, it must be by common consent.

N.B.—See Proverb 242. This saying means that in matters of law, property, &c., what is fixed by common consent cannot be changed but by common consent.

411.

Okiki Oibo kan ka gbogbo aiye.

The fame of the white man spreads throughout the world.

412.

O kan okikiri.

It comes to the knot (i. e., *the difficult point*).

413.

Owo ologiri ehin ti li ogun.

A multitude of warriors behind their leader is like a flock of palm-birds.

N.B.—Said of a man with a long "tail," or of one very popular.

414.

Iwo ko lu omiran li oru o nlu u li ossan?

Do you not first strike the giant in the night, before you strike him in the day?

N.B.—Bribe your judge at night, and bully him by day when the cause comes on.

415.

Bi abu omi si ori o nwa esse ibo.

When water is poured upon the head, it will find its way down to the feet.

N.B.—This means that good actions sooner or later will prevail. Thus we say, "A stone up-thrown will surely fall." It is also applied to a fugitive slave home returning.

416.

Ije on ore ni imu ommo ise ise.

Competition and reward induce a child to work.

417.

Oni emi nlo, olla n 'nlo ki ije ki ajeji ki o gbin Ahusa.

"To-day I am going!—to-morrow I am going!" (*intended removal to-day or to-morrow*) gives the stranger no encouragement to plant the Ahusa (*although it bears fruit very quickly*).

N.B.—A rolling stone gathers no moss.

418.

O le isun bi Opere.

You sleep like the Opere (*a bird noted for sleepiness*).

419.

Oran na de opin.

The matter is come to the highest point.

420.

Ko mo ore, ko mo ora, ti igun esin apatta.

Regardless of kindness, regardless of the purchaser, (*the ungrateful man*) rides the (*lent*) horse over the rocks.

421.

Ki ire ore ki o re sinsin idi re.

Though the porcupine be weary, the (*quills of its*) tail will not be weary.

N.B.—There is a superstition that the porcupine always shakes its quills before feeding, in order to divine what success it will meet with in its excursions.

422.

Osupa gbe oke o mo Oyo obba gbe ille mo ara oko.

As the moon remains stationary above, and yet knows (i.e., *shines over*) Oyo, the capital, so the king remains at home, and knows (*what*) his subjects (*are doing*) in the province.

423.

Nwon sebi otosi ko gbon bi olore, nwon ni o gbon iba ilowo.

Men think that the poor is not as wise as the rich ; for if he were wise, why is he poor ?

424.

Owe li esin oro bi oro ba no owe li afi iwa a, owe on oro ni irin.

A proverb is the horse of conversation ; when the conversation is lost (i. e., *flags*), a proverb revives it : proverbs and conversation follow each other.

N.B.—*Pace* my lord Chesterfield.

425.

Owusuwusu mu oju orun baje gudegude ko je ki orun ki o ran.

The fog spoils the face of the sky: gloominess prevents the sun from shining.

426.

Ta li oje fi obbe 'yi o no je isn.

No one confesses that he has eaten yam with a knife that is lost.

N.B.—So in England; nobody, or the cat, breaks the china.

427.

Enia bi obbo li obbo iya li aso.

The monkey is sure to tear the cloth of any one who is like himself.

N.B.—Said of those who frequent low society; they will surely have their reputations torn, as clothes are torn by a monkey whom one stupidly approaches.

428.

Ohun ti o wu obon ni ifi owo re ira, ohun ti o wu afinju ni ifi owo re ise.

The filthy man lays out his money in whatever pleases him; so does the gay man with his money.

N.B.—No one should meddle with another's rights.

429.

Mofere ipa eiye na. Aki ije ofere li obbe.

"I almost killed the bird!" (*said the sportsman*). "No one can eat 'almost' in a stew" (i. e., "*almost*" *never made a stew—was the reply*).

430.

Ajin ofin ma ta oju ille, opolo ji ofin ma taju ati jade.

A man fallen into a pit, need not hasten to get home :
a frog fallen into a hole, need not hurry to get out.

N.B.—When a matter is hopeless, let it be.

431.

Ase ofon bi alakara.

He is as persuasive as a seller of cakes.

N.B.—Said of "sweet-mouf."

432.

Ogan imado ko se iko li oju.

The great wild boar is not easy to encounter.

N.B.—Said to one who undertakes an impossibility.

433.

Ogan use nkan die.

The great one is trying to show off a little.

N.B.—Spoken in contempt of a boastful man.

434.

Ogbagba wolle o kun ati yo.

The pin is driven into the ground ; the question now
is how to pull it out.

N.B.—We have got into trouble, how shall we get out of it ?

435.

Agarawu yi si ogbon ko ku.

Though an Agarawu (*a tribe of the Popo nation*) fall into a ditch, yet he will not die.

436.

Ogbon-oyibo ti ino okun la wa, aso ki li o bori Akese.

Though the white man's gauze came all the way over the sea, yet what cloth may be compared to cloth of Akese cotton?

N.B.—The Akese is the red-flowered cotton; others say, the sea-island cotton. This saying applies to those superior in action.

437.

Ogedde gbe odo so sinsin; eja gbe ino omi dara.

As the banana by the water-side sends forth moisture, so the fish in the water retains its beauty.

N.B.—Said when praising another's good looks.

438.

Ogegge ko li ewa sa li o fi ara we isu.

The (*poisonous*) cassada has no good qualities; in vain does it appear like the yam.

N.B.—Said of a hypocrite,—the daw that wears another's feathers.

439.

Ise ogero li ole iwa ise ko je mu ise agbara.

A lazy man seeks easy employment: he would never choose a laborious one.

440.

Agongo-oggo.

The man with the knotted club.

N.B.—This alludes to some evil entity which we term "devil:" he is supposed to carry an *Uggo*, or short knotted club.

441.

Bi iwo ko ran 'ni si oja, oja ki iran 'ni si ille.

If you send no one to the market, the market will send no one to you.

N.B.—Nothing can be done without exertion.

442.

Oyibu ta oja ta oruko: Egun ta aso ta edidi.

The European trader sells his goods (*to the Egun or Popo—the people of Badagry and Dahome*): the Egun sells them again with the string round them (i. e., *just as he received them*).

N.B.—This sing-song saying means, that neither of them seeks to make gain by petty retail. The Popo is a middleman.

443.

Ipin ojehun ki ije ina ki o ku.

The good genius of every eater (i. e., *any man*) does not permit fire (*with which food is cooked*) to depart from the hearth.

N.B.—Inculcates trust in Providence.

444.

Li ojo alaiye ti de aiye ni iwa ti se.

From the time that the owner of the world appeared in the world, the world began.

N.B.—The customs (ṣeṣe) of an empire begin with its establishment.

445.

Okanjua babba aron.

Covetousness is the father of disease.

446.

Iggi okanjua so eso pipo, kaka ki ama ka 'a, o yo ake ti i ike lulle.

A tree belonging to an avaricious man, bore abundantly; but instead of gathering the fruit (*little by little*), he took an axe and cut it down (*that he might get all at once*).

N.B.—This is an African version of our goose with the golden eggs.

447.

Okankan li ase ibi, ikoko li ase imolle, bi ataju imolle tan, ki ataju ibi pellu, bi aba ku ara enni ni isin 'ni.

A man must openly practise the duties of relationship, though he may privately belong to a secret association: when he has attended to this, he must attend to that also, because when he dies, it is his relations who must bury him.

N.B.—Said of the “companies,” “trades unions,” or private clubs of the Yoruba people, the dangerous “Akoos” of S’a Leone.

448.

Okkin obba eiye, okkin elewa alla.

The Okkin (*crane*) is a king of birds, and the owner of the beautiful white feathers.

N.B.—A compliment.

449.

Okò kiku mo li osi obiri.

The husband's death is the widow's sorrow.

450.

Okun mo onna telle ki oju re ki o to fo.

The Okun must have known the way before it became blind.

N.B.—The Okun is a harmless reptile with many feet (*the mille-pede*!), and supposed to be sightless.

451.

Enniti ba hu ipa ko hu ipa, enniti iba hu ele ko hu ele, Okun ti oni igba owo ti o ni igba esse nhu iwa pelle.

The person who might have used his strength, did not use his strength; the person who might have used force, did not use force; the Okun, which has 200 hands and 200 feet, acts gently.

452.

Olle kon are lowo, iyanju li agba ijo gbogbo ni ife ire ni.

Laziness lends a helping hand to fatigue: one must persevere, because fatigue must be felt every day.

453.

Bi oju ommo ko to oran ato awigbo.

If a child is not old enough to be an eye-witness of ancient matters, he must be content with hearsay.

454.

Angba ommo adire lowo iku o li ako je ki on ki o re atan lo ije.

A chicken having been preserved (*by being shut up*) from death (i. e., *the hawk*), complained that it was not permitted to feed openly on the dunghill.

N.B.—A reckless man plunges into peril regardless of warning.

455.

Ope li ope ejika ti ko je ewn ki o bo.

Thanks are due to the shoulders, which keep the shirt from slipping off.

N.B.—Be grateful to the man who prevents you falling.

456.

Ore ije ore, ora ije ora, aki idupe motopo.

A gift is a gift, a sale is a sale, but no one will thank you for "I have sold it cheap."

N.B.—So in African-English the people say, "Dash he be dash, trade he be trade." And the Persian proverb is, "Brotherhood is brotherhood, but a kid is always worth half-a-crown."

457.

Osin mo iwe ino mbi eiye oko.

Because the Osin (*water-bird*) knows how to swim, the other birds are envious.

N.B.—A man clever in business is certainly envied.

458.

Ale koko bi osan ogbe jina ohun ma jina.

(*A cutting word is as*) tough as a bowstring: a cutting word cannot be healed, though a wound may.

N.B.—So the Persians say,

“There is healing for hurt of the sword and the spear,

But the wounds of the tongue—they never heal.”

And the French, “Un coup de langue est pire qu'un coup de lance.”

459.

Osin ki isin ennu.

Though a man may miss other things, he never misses his mouth.

N.B.—However great a blockhead a man may be, he can always do something.

460.

Pamolle ko oran afojudi.

The viper allows no insolence.

N.B.—The man who can punish enemies will be well treated.

461.

Pellepe.

A wolf (*believed to have been once a human being, a lycanthrope, a loup-garou*).

462.

Petepete Ijesa o ta si 'ni lara ma won.

If the mud in the Ijesa country adheres to one, it will not (*easily*) be washed off.

N.B.—Slahder's mud sticks.

463.

Bere oju, oju li afeni suti lehin.

An eye-servant promises friendship; but he despises you behind your back.

464.

Olori li ori isan ki isan akan loke ode.

(*The good genius of the*) head prospers the owner of the head, and not the crab on the bank of the river.

N.B.—A fortunate "spirit" is supposed to reside in each man's brain: the crab is used to represent one who has no connection with or claims on, another. The proverb, therefore, signifies that each man has an exclusive right to the proceeds of his own forethought and industry.

465.

Ohun ti aso siwaju li aba, ohun ti asi gbin, li awa; ninkbati ako so siwaju, ti ako gbin sille ki li aoba.

A thing thrown forward will surely be overtaken; a thing planted in the ground will be there to dig up: but if nothing has been thrown forward, what shall be overtaken? and if nothing has been planted, what shall be dug up?

N.B.—As you sow so shall you reap: the industrious make fortunes, the idle do not.

466.

Elekun sonkun o ba ti re lo arokan iba sokun ko dake.

A weeper (*who comes to condole with her friend*) weeps and goes her ways; but one who dwells on painful recollections, weeps and never ceases.

N.B.—Shows that there are different depths of feeling.

467.

Sakata ni ida won won ni Bese.

The morass is an obstruction to the people of Bese town.

N.B.—Said of any obstruction.

468.

Segge ko mo enni obba, ojo ko mo enni owo.

As the Segge does not regard the king's messenger, so the rain does not respect great men.

N.B.—The Segge is the tall "Guinea-grass," bending over the road towards the dry season.

469.

Ille sokoto or Ille koto kiki ekan.

A confined room, containing nought but pins.

N.B.—A riddle, meaning the mouth.

470.

Orisa ti akeke ti ko gb' ike, orisa ti atete ti ko gbite, oju popo ni igbe.

The god that would not be pleased when they tried to please it, the god that would not be propitiated when they tried to propitiate it, must take up its abode in the highway.

N.B.—Said of a person whom you try to please and cannot.

471.

Aki imu ibon tetere.

A gun is not to be held carelessly.

N.B.—As we say, "Look at your gun, but don't allow your gun to look at you."

472.

Gbogbo won fe oju toto.

They all distort their faces.

N.B.—A phrase describing the expression of countenance assumed by those who have a laborious task imposed upon them.

473.

O le bi oju eja ti ehin ko le iwe.

It is hard as the eye of a (*smoked*) fish, which the teeth cannot break.

N.B.—Applicable to any difficult matter.

474.

Awin isan ko si owo win.

The borrower who does not pay, gets no more money lent to him.

475.

Wobia yo tan o pe egbe re wa.

The glutton having eaten to the full (*in the house of a friend*), calls his companions also to come (*to the same house, instead of being satisfied with the hospitality he has received*).

N.B.—Said of a greedy and ungrateful guest.

476.

Owon adire bi iti won kolokolo ni mo fi won o.

The vengeance which the fowls imprecate on the fox, do I imprecate on you!

N.B.—A curse.

477.

Enniti o mo wura li a ita a fun.

Gold should be sold to him who knows the value of it.

N.B.—So the Afghan song says, قدر زر زکر داند.

478.

Yamyam se fuja li aili apa.

The mosquito makes a bold attempt without arms (i. e., *power*) to accomplish it.

N.B.—The buzzing of the mosquito is supposed to resemble the word "Gbe," to carry away. Said of one who undertakes a task far above; as a gnat might say, "Take him up!"—"Carry him off."

479.

Adire olommo yoyo.

A hen that has many chickens (i.e., *the milky way*).

N.B.—So the Oji tribes call the Pleiades “Akokotan ni n'Emma” (hen and chickens).

480.

Aya yo ni ijokan, o ni ki aka on li ehin okankan.

The monkey having one day eaten to the full, desires that his fore teeth may be drawn.

N.B.—Meaning, improvident persons are ready to sacrifice the future to the present.

481.

Aya seju ommo re kiwobo o.

The monkey winked its eye: the young one thrust its finger into it.

N.B.—Meaning, that however quick the wink of the monkey's eye, the motion of the young one's finger is quicker still. This saying exhorts us to be expeditious in our actions.

482.

Iwo mo igun esin re se sesse.

You (*profess to*) know how to ride: how is it that your horse's leg is broken?

483.

Omi li o dano, akengbe ko fo.

It is only the water that is spilt; the calabash is not broken.

N.B.—Meaning, that though failure attended the first attempt, yet, whilst the means exist, another may be made with success.

1868 Callaway Zulu.pdf

NURSERY TALES,
TRADITIONS, AND HISTORIES

OF THE

ZULUS,

IN THEIR OWN WORDS,

WITH

A TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH,

AND NOTES.

BY

THE REV. CANON CALLAWAY, M.D.

VOL. I.



NATAL :

JOHN A. BLAIR, SPRINGVALE ;
DAVIS AND SONS, PIETERMARITZBURG.

LONDON :

TRÜBNER AND CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1868.



R I D D L E S .

1

KQANDELA ni inkomo e nga lali pansi nakanye. Ku ti ngamhla i lalayo i be se i lele umlalela wafuti; a i sa yi 'kupinda i vuke. Ukulala kwayo ukufa. Inkomo e dumile kakulu, isengwakazi; abantwana bayo ba ya londeka i yo. I ba nye njalo kumniniyo, ka i sweli eyesibili, i yo yodwa 'kupela.

GUESS ye a cow which never lies down. When it lies down it lies down for ever; it will never rise up again. Its lying down is death. It is a very celebrated cow, and one which gives much milk; its children are preserved by it. The owner possesses only one; he does not want another; he only requires one.

2

Kqandela ni upuzi; lu lunye, lu neminyombo eminingi; kumbe amakulu; u hlanze izinkulungwane eziningi ngeminyombo yalo; uma u i landa iminyombo yalo a ku ko lapa u nge fumane 'puzi; u ya 'ku wa fumana amapuzi. Uminyombo umunye a wa balwa amapuzi awo; u nge ze wa fa indhla; u nga hamba u ka u dhlala; futi u nge pate umpako ngokwesaba ukuti, "Ngi ya 'kudhla ni pambili na?" Kqa; u nga dhlala u shiye, w azi ukuba loku ngi hamba ngomnyombo, ngi za 'ufumana elinye ngapambili njalo. Nembala ku njalo. Iminyombo yalo i kgedede izwe lonke, kepa upuzi lunye olu veza leyo 'minyombo eminingi. Ku ba i lowo a lande omunye, a li ke ipuzi, bonke ba ya ka eminyonjeni.

GUESS ye a pumpkin-plant; it is single, and has many branches; it may be hundreds; it bears many thousand pumpkins on its branches; if you follow the branches, you will find a pumpkin every where; you will find pumpkins every where. You cannot count the pumpkins of one branch; you can never die of famine; you can go plucking and eating; and you will not carry food for your journey through being afraid that you will find no food where you are going. No; you can eat and leave, knowing that by following the branches you will continually find another pumpkin in front; and so it comes to pass. Its branches spread out over the whole country, but the plant is one, from which springs many branches. And each man pursues his own branch, and all pluck pumpkins from the branches.

3

Kqandela ni inkomo e hlatshe-
lwa 'zibayeni zibili.

GUESS ye an ox which is slaughtered in two cattle-pens.

4

Kqandela ni indoda e nga lali ;
ku ze ku se i mi, i nga lele.

Guess ye a man who does not
lie down ; even when it is morning
he is standing, he not having lain
down.

5

Kqandela ni indoda e nga zama-
zami ; noma izulu li vunguza ka-
kulu, i mi nje, i te pu/le ; umoya
u wisa imiti nezind/lu, kw enakale
okuningi ; kepa yona ku njengo-
kungati li kwebile nje, a i zama-
zami nakancinane.

Guess ye a man who does not
move ; although the wind blows
furiously, he just stands erect ; the
wind throws down trees and
houses, and much injury is done ;
but he is just as if the sky was
perfectly calm, and does not move
in the least.

6

Kqandela ni amadoda amaningi
'enze u/la ; a ya sina ijadu, a vu-
nule ngamatshoba am/lope.

Guess ye some men who are
many and form a row ; they dance
the wedding dance, adorned in
white hip-dresses.

7

Kqandela ni indoda e /lala ezi-
teni ngemi/la yonke, lapa ku /la-
selwa njalonjalo ; kepa i ba nevuso
ku nga puma impi, y azi ukuba
konje namu/la ngi sekufeni ; a i
na/lati lokubalekela. Ukusinda
kwayo ukuba ku pele impi. I
d/le nomfino, ngokuti, "Hau !
nga sinda namu/la ! Ngi be ngi
ng'azi ukuba ngi za 'upuma em-
pini." A i nabantwana, ngokuba
y ake pakati kwezita, ya ti,
"Kqa ; ku/le ukuba ngi be nge-
dwa, kona ko ti ku sa /latshwa
umkosi, ngi be ngi lunga."

Guess ye a man who lives in
the midst of enemies every day,
where raids are made without
ceasing ; and he is alarmed when
the army sets out, knowing that
he is then in the midst of death ;
he has no forest to which he can
escape. He escapes only by the
enemy retiring. He then eats
food, saying, "Ah ! escaped this
time ! I did not think that I
could escape from the midst of the
army." He has no children, be-
cause he lives in the midst of ene-
mies, saying, "No ; it is well that
I should live by myself, and then
when an alarm is given, I may be
ready to escape."

8

Kqandela ni indoda e nga lali
ebusuku ; i lala ekuseni, ku ze ku
tshone ilanga ; i vuke, i sebenze

Guess ye a man who does not
lie down at night ; he lies down in
the morning until the sun sets ; he

<p>ngobusuku bonke ; a i sebenzi emini ; a i bonwa ukusebenza kwayo.</p>	<p>then awakes, and works all night ; he does not work by day ; he is not seen when he works.</p>
--	---

9

<p>Kqandela ni amadoda a hamba e ishumi ; uma ku kona eyomuvo, lawa 'madoda a ishumi a wa hambu ; a ti, "Si nge hambe, loku ku kona umhlola." Ku ya mangalwa kakulu a lawo 'madoda ; a libale uknteta ikcala ngokuti, "Ku ngani ukuba si ve, loku kade si ng' evi na ? Umhlola." A nga tandani naleyomuvo.</p>	<p>Guess ye some men who are walking, being ten in number ; if there is one over the ten, these ten men do not go ; they say, "We cannot go, for here is a prodigy." These men wonder exceedingly ; they are slow in settling the dispute, saying, "How is it that our number is over ten, for formerly we did not exceed ten ?" They have no love for the one over the ten.</p>
--	--

10

<p>Kqandela ni indoda e ku nga tandeki ukuba i hleke kubantu, ngokuba i y' aziwa ukuti, ukuhleka kwayo kubi kakulu, ku landelwa isililo, a ku tokozwa. Ku kala abantu nemiti notshani, nako konke ku zwakale esizweni lapa i hleke kona, ukuti i hlekile indoda e nga hleki.</p>	<p>Guess ye a man whom men do not like to laugh, for it is known that his laughter is a very great evil, and is followed by lamentation, and an end of rejoicing. Men weep, and trees and grass ; and every thing is heard weeping in the tribe where he laughs ; and they say the man has laughed who does not usually laugh.</p>
--	--

11

<p>Kqandela ni umuntu o zenza inkosi, o nga sebeuzi, o hlala nje ; ku sebenza abantu bake bodwa, yena k' enzi 'luto ; u ya ba tshe-nisa loko a ba ku tandayo, kodwa yena ka kw enzi ; a ba boni abantu bake, ba bonelwa u ye, bona ba izimpumpute, isizwe sonke sake ; u yena yedwa o bonayo. Ba y' azi ukuba noma be nga boni bona, ngaye ba ya bona ; ugokuba a ba lambi konke a ba ku swelayo ; u ya ba tata ngezandhla, a ba yise lapa ku kona ukudhla, ba buye</p>	<p>Guess ye a man who makes himself a chief ; who does not work, but just sits still ; his people work alone, but he does nothing ; he shows them what they wish, but he does nothing ; his people do not see, he sees for them, they are blind, the whole of his nation ; he alone can see. They know that though they cannot see, they see by him ; for they do not go without any thing they want ; he takes them by the hand, and leads them to where there is food, and they return with it to their</p>
---	---

nako; kodwa yena ka pati 'luto, ngokuba u zenz' inkosi; u sa za wa ba inkosi, ngokuba abantu bake ba pila ngaye.

Kuqkala kwa ku kona umbango ngokuti, "U nge buse tina, u ng' enzi 'luto; si nga wa boni amand'ila obukosi bako." Wa ba pendula ngokuti, "Loku ni ti a ngi 'nkosi, ngi za 'u/lala ke, ngi tule nje, ngi bheke pansi. Ngalo ke ni ya 'ubona ukuba nem-bala ngi inkosi, ngokuba ngokubheka kwami pansi izwe li za 'kufa; ni za 'kuwela emaweni na semigodini; ni d'liwe na izilo, ni nga zi boni; ni fe na ind'hlala, ukud'la ni nga ku toli; loku ni banga nami, ni izimpumpute."

Nembala ba bona ukuba u inkosi, ba ti, "A ku vunywe obala, a si buse, si ze si pile. Uma si fa ind'hlala, lobo 'bukosi betu bu ya 'kupela. Si amakosi ngokupila." Wa vunywa ke, wa busa ke; izwe la tula.

Kepa umuntu o nga gezi nakaneye; u hlala nje. Kepa ku ti m'la e gula isifwana esincane nje, isizwe sonke sake si hlupoke, ku fiwe ind'hlala; abantu b' esabe ukupuma ezind'lini, ngokuba ba ya 'kuwela emaweni, b' apuke. Ku fiswe ukuba nga e sinda masinyane; ku tokozwe lapa e se sindile.

homes; but he touches nothing, for he makes himself a chief; he remains a chief for ever, for his people are supported by him.

At first there was a dispute, and his people said, "You cannot be our king and do nothing; we cannot see the power of your majesty." He answered them, saying, "Since you say I am not a chief, I will just sit still, and look on the ground. Then you will see that I am truly a chief, for if I look on the ground the land will be desolate; you will fall over precipices and into pits; you will be eaten by wild beasts through not seeing them; and die through famine, being unable to find food; because you dispute with me, you are blind."

So they see that he is a chief, and say, "Let us acknowledge openly that he is our king, that we may live. If we die of famine, that majesty which we claim for ourselves will come to an end. We are kings by living." So he was acknowledged a chief, and reigned; and the country was peaceful.

And he is a man that never washes; he just sits still. And when he is ill even with a slight illness all his nation is troubled, and dies of famine; and the people are afraid to go out of their houses, because they would fall over precipices and be dashed to pieces. They long for him to get well at once; and the people rejoice when he is well.

Kqandela ni inkomo e nge nanyama; a ku sikwa 'ndawo kuyo; ingulukukqa nje; a i hambi uma i

Guess ye a bullock which has no flesh; no one can cut into it any where; it is a mere hard mass; it does not go unless it is

nga kqutshwa, i ma njalo, i ze i sunduzwe umuntu. A i vumi ukusunduzwa uma y enyuswa ngomango ; i ze i vume uma y ehla. Inkomo e nga tandi ukwenyuka ; i tanda ukweuswa njalo, i vume ke.

Futi, a i u weli umfula, i ma nganeno ; uma umuntu e tanda ukuba i wele, nga e i sunduza ngamandhla amakulu ; kepa uma amanzi e tshonisa, a i vumi ukuwela, i ya m kcatshela emanzini ; ngokuba i y' azi ukukcatsha emanzini amakulu, a nga b' e sa i bona. I ketelwa izindawo ezi bonakalayo pansi, ukuze umuntu a i bone, a i kqube kona ngoku i sunduza.

Ukudhliwa kwayo kunye 'kupela, ukukoka ngayo ikcala, uma umuntu e nekcala eli nga kqedwa ngayo. 'Kupela ke i lowo umsebenzi e w enzayo.

Kepa inkomo e nolaka kakulu ; uma i sunduzwa i bekiswa endaweni e ngasenhlala, ku ya hlakani-tshwa abantu aba i kqubayo, omunye a tsho kubo ukuti, "Hlakani- nipa ni ; le 'nkomo ni ya y azi ukuba a i tandani nokwenyuka ; bheka ni i nga si hlabi ; uku si hlaba kwayo ku ya 'kuba kubi kakulu, ngokuba si ngenzansi, yona i ngenhlala ; si ya 'ukohlwa ukuvika, ngokuba indawo imbi, a i si lungele ; si ya 'kuti lapa si ti si ya vika, si we, i fike i si kgedele." I kqutshwa ngokuhlakanipa okunjalo ke, ukuze ku ti lapa se y ala ukwenyuka, i funa ukubuya, ba i dedele, i dhlule ; kumbe ba nga be be sa i landa, ngoba i ya 'kubaleka, i ba shiye, i ze i fike endaweni e lungele yona, abantu i nga sa ba lungele ; b' alhuleke.

UMPENGULA MBANDA.

forced, but always stands still, until it is pushed along by some one. It will not be pushed along if it is driven up a steep place ; but it allows itself to be pushed down. It is a bullock which does not like to go up hill ; it likes always to be made to go down, and then makes no opposition.

Further, it does not cross a river, it stands still on one side ; if any one wishes it to cross, he must push it with great strength ; but if the water is very deep, it will not cross, but hides itself from him in the water ; for it knows how to hide in deep water, and he can see it no more. One chooses for it a place where he can see the bottom, that he may see it and drive it forward by pushing it.

There is only one mode of eating it by paying a debt, if a man has a debt which can be paid by it. That, then, is the only work it can do.

And it is a very fierce bullock ; if it is pushed up hill, the men who drive it are on their guard, and one says to the others, "Be on your guard ; you know that this bullock does not like to go up hill ; take care that it does not gore us ; if it gores us it will be very bad indeed, for we are below, and it is above us, and we shall be unable to shield ourselves, for it is a bad place, and is not advantageous for us ; and when we think we are shielding ourselves, we shall fall, and it come and make an end of us." It is driven with such care, that when it will not go up, and wishes to come back again, they may make way for it and it pass on ; and perhaps they will not follow it any more ; for it will run away, and leave them behind, till it comes to a place which is good for it, but bad for the men. So they are beat.

1870 Steere Swahili.pdf

SWAHILI TALES,

AS TOLD BY NATIVES OF ZANZIBAR.

WITH

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

BY

EDWARD STEERE, LL.D.,

RECTOR OF LITTLE STEEPING, LINCOLNSHIRE, AND CHAPLAIN TO BISHOP TOZER.

L O N D O N :

BELL & DALDY, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1870.

MIFANO.



PROVERBS.

MIFANO.



Haraka, haraka, haina baraka.

Ulimi hauna mfupa.

Mvundá nti mwaná nti, mgeni mzo mpima.

Kipya kinyemi, kigawa kionda.

Mbio za sakafuni hwishia ukingoni.

Kazi mbi si mtezo mwema ?

Si taajabuni, waana Adamu, mambo yalio duniani.

Kilimia kikizama kwa jua, huzuka kwa mvua ; kikizama kwa mvua, huzuka kwa jua.

Sahani iliofunikwa, kilichomo kimestirika.

Hakuna msiba asiokuwa mwenziwe.

Angurumapo simba, mteza nani ?

PROVERBS.



Hurrying, hurrying, has no blessing.

The tongue has no bone.

The destroyer of the country is a child of the country ;
a stranger does not weigh two hundred-weight.

A new thing is good, though it be a sore place.

Running on a roof ends at the edge of it.

Is not poor work good play ?

Wonder not, children of men, at the things that are in
this world.

If the Pleiades rise in sun, they set in rain ; if they
rise in rain, they set in sun.

If a dish is covered, what is in it is hidden.

There is no grief without a companion.

Who will dance to a lion's roaring ?

Saburi ni ufunguo wa faraja.

Abadi, abadi, ukambaa watinda jiwe.

Ndovu wawili wakisongana ziuniazo nyika.

Udongo upate uli maji.

Mlevi wa mvinyo hulevuka, mlevi wa mali halevuki.

Kikulacho kinguoni mwako.

Maombolezo katika kilio si mwema.

Usubi aweza kupenya mote.

Ametumbukia kisimani.



Patience is the key of consolation.

Continually, continually, the cord cuts the stone.

When two elephants struggle it is the grass that suffers.

Use your clay while it is wet.

He that is drunk with wine gets sober, he that is drunk with wealth does not.

What bites is in your own clothes.

Loud lamentations are not becoming in mourning.

A sand-fly can get through anything.

He has fallen into a well.



1879 Setswana Zulu Herero.pdf

FOLK-LORE JOURNAL,

EDITED BY THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH
AFRICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

Semper novi quid ex Africa.

VOL. I.—PART V.

SEPTEMBER, 1879.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
<i>Umambakamaqula</i> Collected by The Rev. O. Staven... 102	102
<i>Kgolodikane</i> Contributed by Mr. S. H. Edwards. 110	110
Setshuâna Proverbs... .. " " " " " " 116	116
Story I. } " " The Right Rev. Edward Steere, LL.D., Missionary	
Story II. } Bishop 118	118

CAPE TOWN:
DARTER BROTHERS AND WALTON.

LONDON:
DAVID NUTT,
270, STRAND.

1879.

were also called *Majabatho* [*] (*ja* = to eat, *batho* = men) or men eaters. The connection between *Ledimo* and *Modimo* is not very obvious. Some think that cannibals were so called on account of the supernatural terror they inspired, others say they were so called from a supposed chief called

[* *Majabatho* :—The following extract from Dr. Emin-Bey's "Journal einer Reise von Mrüli nach der Hauptstadt Unyóro's," &c., found on page 222 of Petermann's Mittheilungen, Part VI., 1879, will be of interest here :—"Für Anthropophagen, die mit dem allgemeinen Namen "valiabantu" (Menschenfresser) bezeichnet werden, existiren eigenthümlicher Weise sowohl in Kinyóro als in Kigánda eigene Ausdrücke; msséri dort und mlúggu hier. Sollte das auf wirkliches Vorkommen dieser Sitte deuten?"]

LIANE TSA SICHUANA.*

(Contributed by Mr S. H. Edwards.)

Choene mopalami ga lebale go oa. (3.)

Hihing go choara noa ka dikobo. (10.)

Ma ngoana ki mochoara thipa. (1.)

Masa mantsi. (1.)

Mokala o palangoa ka lephotho. (7.)

Nama tsitela e thuba pitsa. (2.)

Ngoana moloki ga bolokoe. (5.)

Pelo chula e ya mungoa cona. (12.)

Sedibana se pele ga se ikangoe. (8.)

Schuba moraba. (3.)

Tau go bolaea ee sa dumeng. (4.)

Tlilotsa pele ga se shoa pele. (6.)

* For greater convenience in reference, the above Proverbs are here given in alphabetical order. The numbers which follow them indicate their position in Mr. Edwards' manuscript.

“*Dimo*,” a name which exists here and there still. Others, again, connect the term with the war cry of the Basutos, constantly used at parades of their regiments:—

Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi!	Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi!
Re Madimo;	We are cannibals;
Re ja batho;	We eat men;
Re tla gu ja;	We will eat you;
Re ja bokwana ba bana;	We eat the small brain of children;
Le bokwana ba dinchana.	And the small brain of little dogs.

None of these explanations are satisfactory. The first is the most plausible.

SETSHUANA PROVERBS.

The baboon is a climber, but does not forget that he may fall. (9.)

In the dark, hold on to each other by the robe. (10.)

The mother of the child wards off the knife. (1.)

There are many dawns (or daysprings). (11.)

The “Kameel” thorn tree is climbed by its knobs. (7.)

Overfilling the pot with meat, breaks it. (2.)

The child of the saviour is not saved. (5.)

The bitter heart eats its owner. (12.)

The well ahead is not to be depended on. (8.)

The breast is an intricate net (or mystery). (3.)

The lion which kills, is the one which does not roar. (4.)

The first lame, is not the first to die. (6.)

FOLK-LORE JOURNAL,

EDITED BY THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH
AFRICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

Semper novi quid ex Africa.

VOL. I.—PART VI.

NOVEMBER, 1879.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
USomamekutyo Collected by The Rev. O. Stavem...	126
The Annual Festival of the Zulus Written by The Rev. H. Küch ...	134
Masilo and Masilonyane ... Contributed by Mr. S. H. Edwards	138
Five Herero Sayings or Proverbs Contributed by The Rev. Dr. G. H. Hahn	146

CAPE TOWN:
DARTER BROTHERS AND WALTON.

LONDON:
DAVID NUTT,
270, STRAND.

1879.

HERERO SAYINGS OR PROVERBS.*

(Contributed by the Rev. Dr. C. H. Hahn.)

Ache ngu mave hungire mae yaruka mu o oveni. (2.)

All they say will return to themselves.

Meaning, If one speaks evil, he may be sure of hurting himself.

Eyova kombanda, nozondunge† moukoto. (5.)

Stupid outside and clever inside.

Meaning, Do not judge a person by his outward appearance.

Mu nomutoneoa ngu ma ton' omutone, mu nomurongua ngu ma aruk' momuronge. (4.)

There is a beaten one, who will beat the beater; there is the admonished, who will admonish the admonisher.

Meaning, To-day you and to-morrow I.

Omambo ye tu tuarere tyike, ngu mave hungire? Omakua o nombandye ndyi mai vandara kooma. (3.)

Why are we carried away by that which they speak? It is like a jackal which howls at something grewsome.

Meaning, Why should we lose our temper, when people speak evil of us? There is as little ground for it as a jackal has to fear, when he howls at the "ooma."‡

[* The above Proverbs, the numbers attached to which refer to the order in which they stand in the Rev. Dr. Hahn's manuscript, originally appeared, unaccompanied by translation, in a Herero Primer by the Rev. C. H. Hahn, entitled *Omahongise Uokuleza Motyiherero*, printed at Gütersloh, in Westphalia, in 1862.]

† z, excepting in foreign names, always to be pronounced as the th in "though."

‡ Ooma is a plural noun, having the prefix of nouns referring to persons, like ootate "fathers," gomama "mothers," and appears to mean the manes of the departed.

Ve se§ ve hungire ete ; nanga ve tu hungire outuku nomu-tenya, ka pe nokupohoka otyihongo. (1.)

Let them speak of (or about) us ; although they speak of us night and day, a boil (carbuncle) will not break out.

Meaning, Although people may speak of us continually, it will cause us no harm.

§ s always to be pronounced as the sharp *th* in "think."

FOLK-LORE JOURNAL,

EDITED BY THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH
AFRICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

Semper novi quid ex Africa.

VOL. II.—PART IV.

JULY, 1880.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
The Lion and the Jackal, A Hottentot Story ... Contributed by Mr. <i>Thomas Bain</i>	53
A Fragment illustrative of religious ideas among the Kafirs „ „ the Right Rev. <i>Henry Callaway</i> , M.D., D.D., Bishop of St. John's ...	56
Six Zulu Riddles „ „ Mrs. <i>Hugh Lan-</i> <i>caster Carbutt</i> ...	60
Customs of the Ovaherero at the Birth of a Child „ „ the Rev. <i>E. Dannert</i>	61
Some Sacrificial Customs among the Ovambo „ „ the Rev. <i>M.</i> <i>Rautanen</i> , Finnish Missionary ...	68

CAPE TOWN:

DARTER BROTHERS AND WALTON.

LONDON:

DAVID NUTT,
270, STRAND,

1880,

(2.) *Gantshilili!* a barbarian; one speaking an unintelligible language, requiring an interpreter. *Ukugantshiliza* to talk as a barbarian.

(3.) *Without our seeing him*; i.e., he being enclosed in a ship by which he came to our shore.

(4.) *Branch of a tree*, poetical for a plank.

(5.) *Yellow-wood Tree*; the tree which is most known amongst them as a source of plank.

(6.) *Gokoxi*, in the Kafir, Ugokqozi; but as the first vowel of Kafir Proper Names is always *U*, in taking them over into English, the *U* may as well be dropped: and as the clicks are not easily pronounced by the generality of Europeans, it appears best to drop the click, and write in English the consonant with which the click sound is associated in the Kafir word.

(7.) Kafir, Unokqikqa.

(8.) "*Up on high*," enyangweni; the Inyango is a miniature hut raised on poles for stowing away maize, &c., and so any high place; and heaven.

(9.) *The one-hearted man*, that is, the sincere man, who is reliable because of his truth.

(10.) Lit. By giving gifts and by witchcraft.

(11.) Lit. We had Ukqamata and we had Utikxo.

(12.) *We had righteousness, &c.*, that is, we used the words, and therefore there was that amongst us which the words meant.

(13.) *Men-destroyers, Amagewihha*, which are the same as Abatakati, —Thugs, or men who are supposed to have a vicious pleasure in secret killing and evildoing.

(14.) *There is no God who has just come to us*, viz., That God of whom the missionaries speak is not a new God, but the same God of whom we spoke by the terms Ukqamata and Utikxo.

(15.) *Kosa*, lit. KXosa.

SIX ZULU RIDDLES.

(Contributed by Mrs. Hugh Lancaster Carbutt.)

(1.) *Ngì tshèle ibizo le nyoka ende e dhlula izinyoka ezinye?*—*Indhlala*.

Tell me the name of the longest snake?—*A road*.

(2.) *Ngx bani oma njalo a ngez' a hlata pansì?*—*Isihlahla*.

Who is it that stands always and never sits?—*A tree*.

(3.) *Ngi gu pica nge 'mpongo edhla nez' imbuzi ezi 'mhlope, —yona iya zula, zona zidhla ndawo inye?—Ulimi nama-zinyo.*

I puzzle you with a goat-ram, which grazes with white goats; it moves about much, but they eat in one place.—The tongue and teeth.

(4.) *Guyini ogu zikulisa pambi gwako, uti unga bona, usuge?—Libululu.*

What is it that grows before you, and from which, when you see, you move off?—A puff-adder.

(5.) *Yini into ebanzi epete izinto ezi ningi ezi dhlula ogunye?—Yizulu.*

What wide expanse holds more things than any thing else?—The sky.

(6.) *Yini into engu nina, wabantu, gepa bati guyo, ngi belete, iba belete?—Yihatshi.*

What thing is it that is the mother of a people, and they say to it, 'Carry me,' and it carries them?—A horse.*

CUSTOMS OF THE OVAHERERO AT THE BIRTH OF A CHILD.

(Contributed by the Rev. E. Dannert.)†

As probably more or less every where, so also among the Ovaherero the birth of a child is considered as a cause for

* Among the natives the horse frequently goes by the nickname of *Unina wa Belungu*, i.e., "The Mother of White Men," because of the horse carrying a man as a native woman carries her child, on her back. It is said that in the late Zulu war, at the commencement of a battle, the Zulus always shouted (after their war cry), "Kill the mothers first, we'll kill the children after!"

[† In the translation of this paper, the original of which is in the German language, the kind assistance of the Rev. J. Rath is gratefully acknowledged.]

FOLK-LORE JOURNAL,

EDITED BY THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH
AFRICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

Semper novi quid ex Africa.

VOL. II.—PART V.

SEPTEMBER, 1880.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Fleeing Girls and the Rock, A Herero Legend Contributed by the Rev. <i>H. Belder- becke</i>	76
Proverbs of the Ovaherero ... " " " " " "	84
Some Religious Ideas and Customs of the Ovaherero ; Part I.—Ideas about God, Creation, &c. " " " " " "	88

CAPE TOWN:
DARTER BROTHERS AND WALTON.

LONDON:
DAVID NUTT,
270, STRAND.

1880.

(7.) The snoring sound called in German "Der Puster."

(8.) That they could not make a noise.

(9.) When the Hereros set out on dangerous expeditions, they are first painted on the forehead, with the ashes of the sacred fire, by the "big woman," or by the "big girl."

(10.) This stone lies near the sacred fire, the place of sacrifice. Only the chief or priest sits down upon it.

(11.) Here it must be remarked, that the Ovaheréro and Bergdamaras are born enemies to each other, and that the Omaheréro considers the Bergdamaras as not better than the baboons. Before the Ovaheréro had firearms, the Bergdamaras may have often avenged themselves on their oppressors. At present, horrible bloodshed is being committed by the Ovaheréro (Damaras) among the Bergdamaras and the Bushmen; besides making slaves of children and adults. Unfortunately the Bergdamaras (themselves) sometimes sell some of their own people to the Ovaheréro.

OMIANO VI OVAHERERO.

(Contributed by the Rev. H. Beiderbecke.*)

1. Tyi ri meyo tya kend' eraka.

2. Tya rondo ombaze matyi rondo omupindi.

3. Ongue i tenisa eoe.

4. Ngue ku tarere kongotue, mu tarera kongotue ngue
ku tarere kekoro, mu tarera kekoro.

5. Otyingundi tyi enda ku matyi orrua.

6. Tyipo! Undya okukura.

7. Tyikutu! Koata ozondendu ze yandyunuke.

* The *omiano* or proverbs and adages of the Ovaheréro are stereotype, but intentionally obscure sayings; and they are, on this account, often difficult to translate. I give the following twelve as a specimen, just as they have been written down by Cornelius Zeraua, the native schoolmaster at Otyimbingue. I also give a few explanations, together

(12.) This magic sentence cannot be translated. Perhaps it is very old Otyihereró. The people themselves at least say so. Only the word *yena* (or *ena*) is still clear, and means: Name. The word *mbemburukire* is not now met with in Otyihereró, but it may possibly be a contraction of *Ndyi (mbi) zemburukira*, which means Remember me [who I am] ! or of *Ndyi (mbi) pamburukira*, which means: Open to me ! With respect to the third word in the sentence, which is also not met with in Otyihereró, I will only say that *Ourumbu* means drought, famine. The root of this word means something yellow.

(13.) The Ovahereró girls have sometimes a small iron bell fastened to their clothes.

(14.) It is the custom of the Ovahereró, when walking in a line, to keep the order of their respective ages and rank.

(15.) Literally : "She has spoken the language of the youngest," which has no weight.

(16.) Being without their arms.

PROVERBS OF THE OVAHERERO.

1. It is in the tooth, it troubles the tongue ⁽¹⁾.
2. It climbed up the foot, it will climb up the shin-bone ⁽²⁾.
3. The panther causes the stone to threaten ⁽³⁾.
4. He who looked at you from behind, look at him from behind ; he who looked at you in front, look at him in front ⁽⁴⁾.
5. A weak person goes where he is smiled at ⁽⁵⁾.
6. Misfortune ! Wait for growing older ⁽⁶⁾.
7. Family ! Give birth to females (that) they multiply themselves ⁽⁷⁾.

with the translation.

[In the Manuscript original, sent down by the Rev. H. Beiderbecke, the Otyihereró text was accompanied by a German translation only. For an English translation of the latter, we are indebted to the kind assistance of the Revs. J. Rath and F. Kolbe.]

8. Ngondi ! Peua u huhane.

9. Otyitona tyaa norutu.

10. Tyi ua rire ouyenda a rire tyi ua tyindire.

11. Ouye otyirunduruka onya yohorongo.

12. Otyikondambunda tyi nehaamo nombaze i neputuko.

1. Said to one who has met with some misfortune or other, and who gives himself the appearance that he does not care about it.

2. The meaning is, for instance : A little war on the borders may spread over the whole country.

3. Mountainous and rocky parts of the country are in disrepute on account of the beasts of prey housing there ; hence people fear the rocks, but they ought rather to fear and blame the animals.—Parents, or elder brothers and sisters (the stone or rocks of the proverb), are held responsible for the faults and misdeeds of the younger members of the family, and should they complain of it as being unfair, this proverb is given them as an answer.

4. Meaning : Measure for measure ; Tit for tat.

5. Where a poor person has met with kindness, there he likes to go again.

6. Misfortune waits for the becoming older. Children are happy, because they know nothing of the troubles and misery of life.

7. The meaning is : Through the females, the family or tribe will increase.

8. When a bargain is offered to a poor man, he becomes frightened

8. Poor One ! Be given (or receive an offer), that you may be frightened (or shrink back) ⁽⁸⁾.
 9. (Literally intranslatable). See the explanations ⁽⁹⁾.
 10. Because thou hast eaten, when thou wert travelling, therefore thou dost want to go again ⁽¹⁰⁾.
 11. The world is something turning (or changeable), like the horn of the koodoo ⁽¹¹⁾.
 12. The hinder part wishes to sit down, but the foot will run or wander about. (Difficult to translate literally) ⁽¹²⁾.
-

and shrinks back. This proverb is chiefly used when a wife is offered to some one, and he shrinks at the thought of the expenses and duties connected therewith.

9. In common Otyihéréro it would perhaps be : *Otyitoneno tya kacndya (tye rizengisa) n'orutu* — The stroke is hidden in the body to appear again later. The natives are much inclined to ascribe illness and pain to blows and knocks, formerly received, or to a fall which may have occurred years previously.

10. Some one pays a visit, he is kindly received and well treated. Coming home to his daily toil, he longs to be abroad again ; where, however, he has seen people only in their Sunday dress, as he is reminded in this proverb by way of warning.

11. This is firstly smooth and straight, but, further on, twisted and bent backwards.

12. Difficult to translate literally. A traveller comes to a werft, and legs for something. The owner of the werft refuses ; and the traveller says to him by means of this proverb : Just at this moment perhaps thou thinkest that thou dost not need to go round begging ; but one day thou also mayst be in my position.

1883 Swahili.pdf

SWAHILI STORIES
FROM
ARAB SOURCES,
WITH AN
ENGLISH TRANSLATION..

SO
LI
DEO
GL
OR
IA



ZANZIBAR,
1881.

251. g. 398

wakashukuru shukuru ya milele.

MIFANO.

Tulingane sawasawa, kama sahani na kawa.

Mtoto umleavyo, ndivyo akuavyo.

Mjumbe hauawi.

Akutendaye mtende, usimche akutendaye.

Fathili za nyuki ni moto. -

Heri kukwaa kidole, kuliko kukwaa ulimi.

Kinga na kinga, ndipo moto uwakapo.

Njia ya uwongo fupi.

Ujinga wa kuza, si ubarathuli wa kununua.

Chema chajiuza, kibaya chajitembeza.

Mti hauendi illa kwa nyenzo.

Kawaida kana sheria.

Mpanda ovyo, kula ovyo.

Kufaa hakuthuru.

Siuchezei muhogo mchungu.

Samaki mmoja akioza, wameoza wote.

Mtungi haukuvunjika, maji hayakumwagika.

Wa kuume haukati wa kushoto.

Mtaka cha mvunguni huinama.

Saburi yavuta heri.

Mtaka yote kwa pupa, hukosa yote.

Mpanda frasi wawili, hujishuka miguu miwili.

Paka akiondoka, panya hutawala.

VITENDAWILI.

Gumugumu huzaa teketeke, teketeke huzaa
gumugumu. MAHINDI.

Mtoto wangu killa mwaka hulala chini. BOGA.

Ubwabwa wa mtoto mtamu. USINGIZI.

Baki bandika, baki bandua. MGUU UKIENDA.

Nimemtuma mjumbe, amekwenda, aliokwenda
kwita amekwisha kuja, na yule mjumba ha-
jaja. NAZI.

Njia ya sikuzote haina alama. BAHARI.

Nalikwenda njiani hasikia, Wifi, mwenyi kuniita
sikumwona. BAAZI KAVU ZILIZO MTINI.

Watu wangu wanapigana, wengine wanakufa.

MBISI.

Nyumba yangu kubwa, makuti tele, ikinya
mvua kuvuja. MWIMBI.

Shungi ya Mwaratu inapepea. TAA.

Nyumba yangu kubwa haina taa. KABURI.

Para hatta nyika. KUTELEZA.

Kibibi kikongwe chapepeta mafuta. KOPE.

Ukumbuu wa baba mrefu. NJIA.

Nimetupa mshale wangu, mchana kwenda mbali
nikitupa usiku hauendi mbali. MACHO.

Kwenda zako endako, ukirudi kukikuta vilevile.
JAA.

Waana watatu, akiondoka mmoja, wawili hawafai.
MAFIGA.

Nnao watoto hamsini, sitini, nimewapa visibau
vyeupe wote. KUNGURU.

Nyumba yangu kubwa, kiguzo kimoja. UYOGA.

Marra chako, marra changu. MALI.

Watu theneen u asharini wakaenda njiani, wa-
wili wakaona chungwa moja, wakapanda wote the-
neen u ashirini wakaenda juu ya mchungwa, watu
watano wakalichuma chungwa, wakashuka wote,
wakaja chini, watu kumi wakamenya chungwa lile
moja, watu watano wakampa mtu moja akala, wote
wakawa wa rathi. VIDOLE NA MACHO.

PROVERBS.

We match together, like a dish and a cover.

As you bring up a child, so he grows.

A herald is never killed.

As he does to you, do to him, fear not him who does ought to you.

A bee's thanks are the fire.

It is better to stumble with the toe, than with the tongue.

A brand to a brand, that is how the fire burns up.

A lie goes but a little way.

Folly to sell, is not silliness to buy.

A good thing sells itself, a bad one offers itself about.

A log will not go without rollers.

Custom is as good as law.

Plant rubbish, eat rubbish.

Profit is no harm.

Don't play with poisonous cassava.

If one fish is bad, they are all bad.

If the jar is not broken, the water is not spilt.

The right hand does not cut the left.

If you want what is under the bed, you must stoop.

Patience brings luck.

He who wants all for greediness, misses all.

He who rides on two horses comes down on two feet.

When the cat goes away, the rat is king.

ENIGMAS.

The hard is the parent of the soft, and the soft of the hard. MAIZE.

My child each year lies on the ground.

A PUMPKIN.

The child's pap is sweet.

SLEEP.

Now the skin's on, now the skin's off.

A FOOT IN WALKING.

I sent a messenger, he went, the one he went to call has come already, but the messenger has not come back yet.

A COCOANUT,

(Because the man who climbs for it throws it down).

An every day road, there is no mark. THE SEA.

I went on the road and heard, "Sister in law," but I could not see who called me.

DRY BAAZI ON THE TREE.

My people are fighting, some are dying.

PARCHED CORN.

My house is large with plenty of thatch, when the rain falls it leaks. MWIMBI [a kind of grain].

The Arab's crest waves about. **A LAMP.**

My great house has no lamp. **THE GRAVE.**

A slide to the wilderness. **SLIPPING.**

The old old lady is beating oil. **THE EYE-LID.**

Father's girdle is long. **A ROAD.**

I cast my arrow in the day time, it went far
off, if I cast it at night it does not go far.

THE EYES.

Going where you go, if you return you find it
just the same. **A DUST HEAP.**

Three children, if one is gone, the two are no
good. **STONES TO SET A POT ON OVER A FIRE.**

I have fifty or sixty children, I have given
them all white waistcoats.

KUNGURU [a black and white crow].

My house is large, it has one post. **A MUSHROOM.**

Now yours, now mine. **PROPERTY.**

Twenty-two people went along the road, two
saw one orange, all two and twenty climbed up the
orange tree, five people picked the orange, they all
descended and came down, ten people peeled that
one orange, five people gave it to one man and he
ate it, and all were content.

FINGERS, TOES, AND EYES.

1886 Theal Xhosa.pdf

KAFFIR FOLK-LORE:

A Selection from the Traditional Tales

*CURRENT AMONG THE PEOPLE LIVING ON THE
EASTERN BORDER OF THE CAPE COLONY*

WITH
COPIOUS EXPLANATORY NOTES.

BY
GEO. MC CALL THEAL,
AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF THE COLONIES AND STATES OF
SOUTH AFRICA."

SECOND




EDITION.

LONDON:
SWAN SONNENSCHN, LE BAS & LOWREY,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1886.

36316

PROVERBS AND FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS.

HE language of a Kaffir is adorned with figurative expressions, some of which are readily understood by an Englishman, but others, when literally interpreted, are to us meaningless. Such expressions, however, are found upon inquiry to refer to some circumstance in their mode of living, or some event in their traditional history, which makes the meaning very clear. A few of their commonest proverbs and figurative expressions are here given :—

Isikuni sinyuka nomkwezeli.

A brand burns him who stirs it up.

This proverb is an exact equivalent to our English one, Let sleeping dogs lie.

Njengo mdudo ka Mapassa.

Like the marriage feast of Mapassa.

This saying is used to denote anything unusually grand. The marriage festivities of one of the ancients, Mapassa by name, are said to have been carried on for a whole year.

Ishwa lomhluzi wamanqina.

Misfortune of soup made of shanks and feet.

Applied to any person who never does well, but is always getting into scrapes. The kind of soup spoken of is very lightly esteemed by the Kaffirs.

Akuko mpukane inqakulela enye.

One fly does not provide for another.

A saying of the industrious to the idle, meaning that each should work for himself as the flies do.

Kude e-Bakuba, akuyiwanga mntu.

Bakuba is far away, no person ever reached it.

Bakuba is an ideal country. This proverb is used as a warning against undue ambition, or as advice to be content with that which is within reach. It is equivalent to our English saying, It is no use building castles in the air.

Kuxeliwe e-Xukwane apo kumaqasho makulu.

They have slaughtered at Kukwane where much meat is obtainable.

According to tradition, there was once a very rich chief who lived at Kukwane (near King William's Town), and who was in the habit of entertaining strangers in a more liberal manner than any who went before or who came after him. This proverb is used to such as ask too much from others, as if to say, It was only at Kukwane that such expectations were realized.

Qabu Unoqolomba efile.

I rejoice that Kolomba's mother is dead.

The mother of Kolomba was, according to tradition, a very disagreeable person. This saying is used when anything that one dreads or dislikes has passed away.

Izinto azimntaka Ngqika zonke.

It is not every one who is a son of Gaika.

Gaika was at the beginning of this century the most powerful chief west of the Kei. This proverb signifies that all are not equally fortunate.

Uyakulila ngasonye uxele inkawu.

You will shed tears with one eye like a monkey.

A warning used to deter any one from being

led into a snare of any kind. It is said that when a monkey is caught in a trap he cries, but that tears come out of one eye only.

Lukozo lomya.

It is the seed of the umya (a species of wild hemp).

This saying is applied to any thing or person considered very beautiful. The seed referred to is like a small jet black bead.

Udhle incholo.

He has drunk the juice of the flower of the wild aloë.

Said of a dull, sleepy person. This juice when drunk has a stupefying effect, and benumbs the limbs so as to make them powerless for a time.

Indonga ziwelene.

The walls have come into collision.

Said of any dispute between persons of consequence.

Uvutelwe pakati nje nge vatala.

He is ripe inside, like a water-melon.

Said of any one who has come to a resolution without yet expressing it. From its appearance it cannot be said with certainty whether a water-melon is ripe or not.

Isala kutyelwa siva ngolopu.

A person who will not take advice gets knowledge when trouble overtakes him.

Uyakuva into embi eyaviwa ngu Hili wase Mambalwini.

You will find out what Hili of the Amambalu experienced.

Hili, or Tikoloshe, is, according to the belief of the Kaffirs, a mischievous being who usually lives in the water, but who goes about as a human dwarf playing tricks upon people. He milks the cows when no one is watching them. He causes women to fall in love with him, for he is of a very amorous disposition towards the female sex. The uncivilized Kaffirs, even at the present day, do not doubt the existence of such a being. It is said that a long time ago there was a man of the Amambalu who had good reason to suspect that his wife had fallen in love with Hili. He accordingly pretended to go upon a journey, but returned in the middle of the night and fastened his dogs at the door of his hut. He then went inside and kindled a fire, when, as he anticipated, he found Hili there. The man called his neighbours, who came with sticks and beat Hili till he

was unable to move. They then tied him up in a bundle, fastened him to the back of the woman, and sent her away to wander wherever she liked.

This saying is applied as a warning to people to avoid doing wrong, lest the punishment of Hili overtake them.

Ulahla imbo yako ngopoyiyana.

You have cast away your own for that which you are not sure of.

This proverb is equivalent to the English one, A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Yimbabala yolwantunge.

He is a buck of an endless forest.

A saying applied to a shiftless person, one who never continues long in any occupation.

Uzipembela emoyeni.

You are lighting a fire in the wind.

Said to any one who favours strangers in preference to relatives, or to their disadvantage.

Yintlolela yombini.

A spy for both.

Said of a talebearer.

Akuko ramncwa lingagqimiyo kowalo um-xuma.

There is no beast that does not roar in its den.

This proverb means that a man recognises no superior in his own establishment. It is the Kaffir equivalent for, Every cock crows on his own dunghill.

Inja yomoya.

A dog of the wind.

A saying applied to any one who has no settled plan of living.

Ukaka kampetu.

The shield turned the wrong way.

This saying is applied to any one who goes over from one party to another. It is a common expression for one who turns evidence against accomplices in crime.

Ngumpa wezala.

It is a cob stripped of maize in an ashpit.

Said of a worthless character.

Isinama ndokunamatela.

I, the adhesive grass, will stick fast to you.

The isinama is a kind of grass that sticks to one's clothing when it is touched, and can hardly be brushed off afterwards. This proverb is used as a warning to any one to avoid a bad habit or an unworthy companion that cannot easily be got rid of.

Alitshonanga lingenandaba.

The sun never sets without fresh news.

Amaqotyazana angalaliyo emzini.

They are people of experience who do not sleep at a strange place.

This proverb is used in praise of one who is smart in going a message, or who performs any duty at a distance quickly.

Wokolwa yeyokosa.

You will prefer roasted meat.

This saying is applied to any one who is boasting immoderately, as a warning that if he does not take care he will get into trouble, when he will be glad to take whatever comes to hand. He will prefer roast meat because it is easily cooked, and he will have neither time nor means to boil it. This saying is also used as a threat, as if one said, I will punish you thoroughly.

Kuhla ngamqalamnye.

Throats are all alike in swallowing.

This proverb is used when one asks another for anything, and implies, If you do not give to me now, I will not give to you when I have anything that you would like a share of.

Omasiza mbulala.

The people who rescue and kill.

This saying is applied to Europeans. It first arose from the heavy demands made by Lord Charles Somerset upon the Gaikas in return for English protection, but the Kaffirs maintain that we have acted up to the description ever since. It is sometimes put in this form, The people who protect with one hand and kill with the other.

Kukuza kuka Nxele.

The coming of Nkele.

Nkele (the lefthanded), or Makana, one of the most remarkable men that Kaffirland has produced, rose by his own merits from a private station to be the leader of the Ndlambe clans in the second decade of this century. It was he who united them against the English after Lord Charles Somerset invaded their country with a view of compelling them to recognise a chief whom they detested. He led in person the attack upon Grahamstown, and only retreated after the flower of his forces was swept away. To obtain peace for his people, he voluntarily surrendered to the English troops, and was sent as a prisoner of state to Robben Island. In attempting to

make his escape from the island in a boat, he was drowned. But the Kaffirs would not believe that Makana was dead, for they deemed him immortal. All through the wars of 1835, 1846-7, and 1851-2, they looked for his reappearance to lead them to victory. Ten years ago his personal ornaments were still in preservation at a village near King William's Town, but about that date the hope of his return was generally abandoned. Injunctions which Makana laid upon his countrymen are still implicitly obeyed. Before his time the corpses of common people were not usually interred, but by his orders it has been done ever since.

The saying implies anything long expected, but which never occurs. It is now in general use, though it is only of a few years' standing.

Ilizwe lifile.

The land is dead.

A saying which implies that war has commenced.

Ubukulu abubangwa.

One does not become great by claiming greatness.

This proverb is used to incite any one to

the performance of noble deeds. It means, a man's actions, not his talk and boasting, are what people judge of his greatness by.

Kuhlangene isanga nenkohla.

The wonderful and the impossible have come into collision.

A saying applied to any intricate question.

Yinkungu nelanga.

The mist and the sun are together.

A saying denoting a very great number.

Lunyawo lwemfene.

It is the foot of a baboon.

A saying denoting a treacherous person.

Sova singasemoyeni.

We shall hear, we are on the side towards which the wind blows.

The saying denotes, we shall soon know all that is going on.

Umke namangabangaba aselwandhle.

He has gone in pursuit of the (fabulous) birds of the sea.

A saying applied to one whose ambitious aspirations are not likely to be realized.

Umona wasemlungwini ubandeza icitywa ungaliqabi.

They prevent us from getting red clay from the pit, and they do not use it.

This saying is used of Europeans, to denote that they act as the dog in the manger towards the Kaffirs. It has unfortunately become a very common expression.

Usela ngendebe endala.

You drink out of the old cup.

The indebe is a drinking vessel made of rushes. The saying is used to a wealthy man, and means, You use a vessel handed down to you from your ancestors.

Ukasela eziko.

You are creeping on your knees to the fire-place.

This saying is used as a warning to any one who is following a course that must lead to ruin. It is as if one said, You are like an infant crawling towards the fire circle (in the middle of a Kaffir hut), who is sure to get burnt.

Ukuhlinza impuku.

To skin a mouse.

A saying which implies, to do anything secretly. A mouse can be skinned without any one seeing it, but an ox cannot.

Yeyele ngelomkono.

It has stuck fast by one of the front legs.

This saying is used when one has committed oneself to any matter of importance. An animal cannot extricate itself easily when fast by one of its front legs.

Ugqada mbekweni.

One who eats the remains of a meal without first obtaining permission.

This saying is used of an uncalled-for expression of opinion.

Ukaulela inkawu ziyakasela.

You disturb monkeys on their way to drink.

This saying is used to express uncalled-for interference.

Umafa evuka njengenyanga.

It dies and rises like the moon.

Said of any question that springs up again after it is supposed to be settled.

Akuko nkanga idubula ingeti.

There is no wormwood that comes into flower and does not wither.

A proverb descriptive of the life of man.

Unyawo alunampumlo.

The foot has no nose.

This proverb is an exhortation to be hospi-

table. It is as if one said, Give food to the traveller, because when you are on a journey your foot will not be able to smell out and avoid a man whom you have turned from your door, but to your shame it may carry you to his.

Uzicandele umgalagala.

You have exposed yourself.

This saying is applied as a warning not to give anything to an importunate person, as he would very likely be encouraged thereby to continue asking for more.

Inkala ixingetyeni.

The crab has stuck fast between the stones at the entrance of its hole.

Said of any one who is involved in difficulties of his own creation, or of one who raises an argument and is beaten in it.

Ubopeleleinja enkangeni.

He has fastened a dog to a shrub.

This saying is used to denote a very greedy person, one who is so greedy as to fasten his dog to a shrub that the animal may not beg for food while he is eating. The shrub denoted is the very common one that is covered with yellow flowers at midsummer.

Yimbini yezolo yakwa Gxuluwe.

Guluwe's two of yesterday.

This is a saying of any one who goes away promising to return, and does not do so. It had its origin in an event which happened five generations back. Guluwe was a hunter of great renown, who crossed the Kei with Khakhabay, the great-grandfather of the late Sandile. No man was ever so skilful and successful in the pursuit of game as he. But when Khakhabay took possession of the Amatolas, which he purchased from the Hottentot chieftainess Hoho, he found them infested by great numbers of bushmen. One day Guluwe, who had two young men with him, killed an eland, but while he was still shouting his cry of triumph: "Tsi! ha! ha! ha! ha! the weapons of Khakhabay!" he was surprised by a number of these inhuman abatwa. They said: "Look at the sun for the last time, you shall kill no more of our game." Guluwe offered them a large quantity of dacha (a species of wild hemp, used for smoking) for his ransom. One of the abatwa was unwilling to spare him, but all the rest agreed. They kept him with them while he pretended to send the two young men for the dacha, but

privately he told them not to return. The bushmen then commenced to eat the eland. They ate that day, and all that night, never ceasing to watch Guluwe. The next morning they asked him when the young men would be back with the dacha, and he replied that he did not expect them before sunset. The abatwa, gorged with meat, then lay down to sleep, all except the one who advised that Guluwe should not be spared. That one watched a while longer, but at length he too was overcome by drowsiness. Guluwe then with his assagai put one after another to death, until, forgetting himself, he shouted his cry: "Tsi! ha! ha! ha! ha! Izikali zika Rarabe!" This awakened the bushman who had advised that he should be killed; he now sprang to his feet and escaped, calling out as he ran with the speed of the wind: "I said this Guluwe of the Khakhabays should be destroyed; you who are dead have perished through not following my advice."

1887 Churchman Central Africa.pdf

world," that whenever, in the story of the Old Testament, there is reference to the burnt offering, or the sin-offering, or the peace-offering, these thoughts shall lead at once to Calvary, and to Him whom St. John Baptist had pointed out as "the Lamb of God," and who was there "led as a lamb to the slaughter." To a mind thus trained, the finding of a Lamb on the throne in heaven, in St. John's vision, will be no unmeaning picture, but will convey a true idea.

One cannot close this rapid consideration of the first part of our subject, without a word as to the value in bringing out the unity of Holy Scripture, of every glimpse of certain root-thoughts as they recur again and again throughout the history of the Kingdom of God. This may be illustrated by means of the tree of life. We find it in Eden, as the food whereby man would have attained to immortality if he had remained sinless. It reappears in the heavenly Jerusalem, where to eat of it is the reward of "him who overcometh." And through both dispensations, runs this principle, whereby is associated the idea of access to God, and high spiritual blessing, with the act—indispensable to physical life—of eating and drinking.

From the time when upon the Mount, those who were to be called to minister in the Priest's office, together with the seventy elders "saw God, and did eat and drink," all through the Levitical sacrifices, and down to the Christian altar where the faithful are nourished by "the living bread which came down from heaven," this principle may be clearly discerned. Surely we cannot, without great loss, overlook, in the Old Testament, any of this significant teaching which leads so directly to Christ; indeed, are we not bound to search through everything recorded there for "Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write"?

Without at all meaning to convey the thought that either Testament is to be studied by itself, there are certain considerations which especially apply to the New Testament, and which go to make up the teacher's point of view.

The New Testament was given to establish the faith, not to form it; given, that we might know the certainty of those things which we have believed. Christianity is older than its documents. An eminent divine in the American Church has recently said, "Christianity was not evolved from the New Testament; the books grew out of it. First in order came the Church; she was established, organized, fully equipped and at her work, before one line of the New Testament was penned. The gospels, acts, epistles, were written for people already living in full communion with the Catholic Church, and instructed in her faith and usages. These historical documents then cannot be understood without reference to the historical body out of which they came, and for which they were designed."

With this thought well in mind of when the evangelists wrote, that St. Luke's Gospel was probably given to the Church about thirty years after the Ascension of our Lord, St. Matthew's and St. Mark's a few years earlier, and St. John's Gospel later than A.D. 85, it will be apparent to the teacher that the Creeds of the Church must be his guide and his safeguard in what pertains to fundamental doctrine. He will not expect to find in the New Testament a com-

pendium of theology, or a system of teaching lying on the surface which the devout and humble-minded student shall perceive by a kind of instinct. The gospels are essentially a biography, the life of God in the flesh. How prayerfully it is to be studied, how lovingly brooded over, is apparent, when we consider that this pattern life is to be lived over again, in and by us, that we must strive to catch its spirit, to discover the hidden principles that underlie those words and deeds which the Holy Ghost selected to be left upon record for the Church. How opposite these principles are to our worldly ways and maxims is made plain by the fact that constantly our Lord met the circumstances of life and the reasoning of men in a way quite contrary to our natural expectations as to what He would do or say. Stier suggests that in this historical picture of the Lord's life and work, we may feel sure that the divinely-guided selection from such a vast store of material, embraced mainly, the beginnings and turning-points, the buds and germs of development, and he adds that the Acts of the Apostles is a perfect pattern of the skill and truthfulness which should mark such an historical condensation.

Secondly, How shall the Prayer Book be used to explain and illustrate the Bible?

As there remains time for only the briefest consideration of this division of our subject, we will give it to a glance at some aspects in which the Prayer Book teaches us to regard the Psalms; and how a study of the history of the Church as far as it is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, may be helped by connecting with it the study of the Prayer Book.

The Church gives us the Psalter as a manual of devotion, our inspired means of speaking to God. It is, moreover, our inheritance from the Church of God under the old covenant, a visible bond showing its unity under both dispensations. The Bishop of Central New York, in his preface to the "Treasury of the Psalter," a publication of exceeding value to the teacher, uses these words: "The Psalms were evidently designed to be an intelligible guide to the Christian life, both inward and outward; an aid in all the exercises and seasons of devotion; an authoritative expounder and sanction to the Book of Common Prayer, and a source of singular illumination to the progress and teaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom among men . . . The Psalms were not only arranged for the temple service; they were prepared by the Holy Spirit for the use of the Son of God in our flesh. And, therefore, being fitted for Him who is the perfect man, they are fitted for humanity in its whole breadth and extent, and in all the ages of its duration. The Psalter is the book of prayer and praise of the Church of all ages, because it is the Prayer Book of our Lord and Master and Redeemer."

A few words on the Acts of the Apostles. Although the Bible contains all that is necessary to be believed, there must be a rule of faith to interpret aright the sense of Holy Scripture. The Church is the witness and keeper of Holy Writ, and in the Creed she gives us Scripture interpreted by tradition. This teaching we find more fully developed and explained in her service books, which have been the growth of ages. In the Anglican branch of the Church it is embodied in her Book of Common Prayer,

and we shall find this volume an intelligible commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, which is the ecclesiastical part of the New Testament, the record to which we should go for our conceptions of what is essential to the being of the Church of God. We find there that as she is both visible and inward, so in all pertaining to her there is this twofold character. The divine life bestowed upon her at Pentecost came not unseen and unknown, but with "outward visible sign of the inward spiritual grace." As the gospels, of which the Acts is the historical continuation, tell us of what our Lord "began" to do upon earth, so the Acts tell us of how, after His Ascension, He continued working with the apostles, and our Prayer Book teaches us to claim for their successors His sacred promise to be with them officially unto the end of the world.

The Acts may best be studied by a division into subjects, *e.g.*, the founding of the Church; references to, and teaching about the sacraments; the government of the Church; her threefold ministry; and a search for hints concerning Church customs; all recorded examples of worship, etc. And let us be sure in guiding our Sunday-school children through a study of the Apostolic Church, that they look for the explanation of the marvellous life which thrilled her, to the simple statement given in the Acts, as to its source: "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

PROVERBS FROM CENTRAL AFRICA.

Some of our missionaries have collected a number of Central African proverbs. Many of them appear as old friends in a new dress, but most have a freshness of the soil about them. Others, again, are as prosy as—well, as proverbs ought not to be. A few of them are as follows:

He that injures another injures himself.

He who forgives is victor in the dispute.

We should not treat others with contempt.

An inmate that cannot be tamed (said of fire).

The sword does not know the head of the blacksmith (who made it).

A mischief-maker will not do to tell secrets to.

If the whole assembly of the town convene, they find no sacrifice to make against sorrow.

Though many guests be absent, it is the cheerful man we miss.

He who harasses one, teaches him strength.

The pig has wallowed in the mire, he is seeking a clean person to rub against (said of disgraced persons who wish to keep good company).

A strong man without economy is the father of laziness.

Help to the end is the help we must give to a lazy man.

A bribe puts the judge's eyes out, for a bribe never speaks the truth.

The thread follows the path of the needle.

A stubborn man gets into trouble, a pliable man is imposed on.

The vaulted tomb frightens old men.

A scorpion stings with his tail, a saucy servant with his eye.

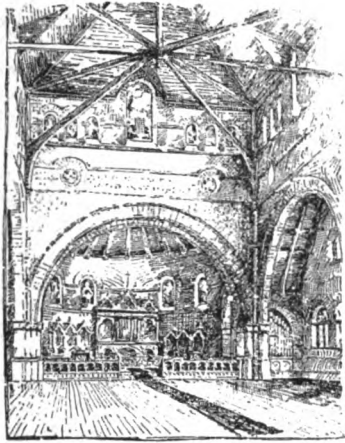
He fled from the sword and hid in the scabbard.

Don't hang your troubles on my neck.
 He who claps for a fool to dance is no
 better than a fool.
 It may be long, but a lie will be detected.
 Ashes fly in the face of the thrower.
 Ear, hear the other side.
 If the elephant may get angry, so may
 the ant.

half a dozen communicants. This number
 has grown at the rate of about one hundred
 annually, so that the parish now numbers
 about 300 communicants.

The new church edifice which they are
 about to erect on the corner of Tracey
 Avenue and Tenth Street, will be of rock-
 faced Colorado red-stone; the lantern will

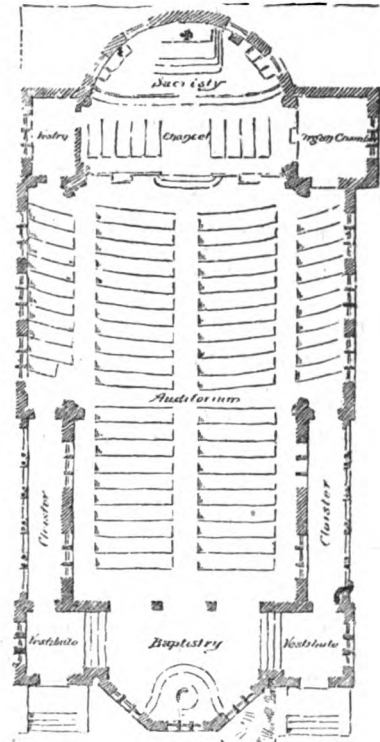
wood of a deep red color, and harmonizing
 with the finish of walls, which will be cov-
 ered with terra cotta tile of churchly de-
 sign, twelve inches square, as also, the four
 massive arches which spring from large
 dwarf stone columns and support the lan-
 tern at the intersection of nave and tran-
 septs. The ceiling of the church, as also



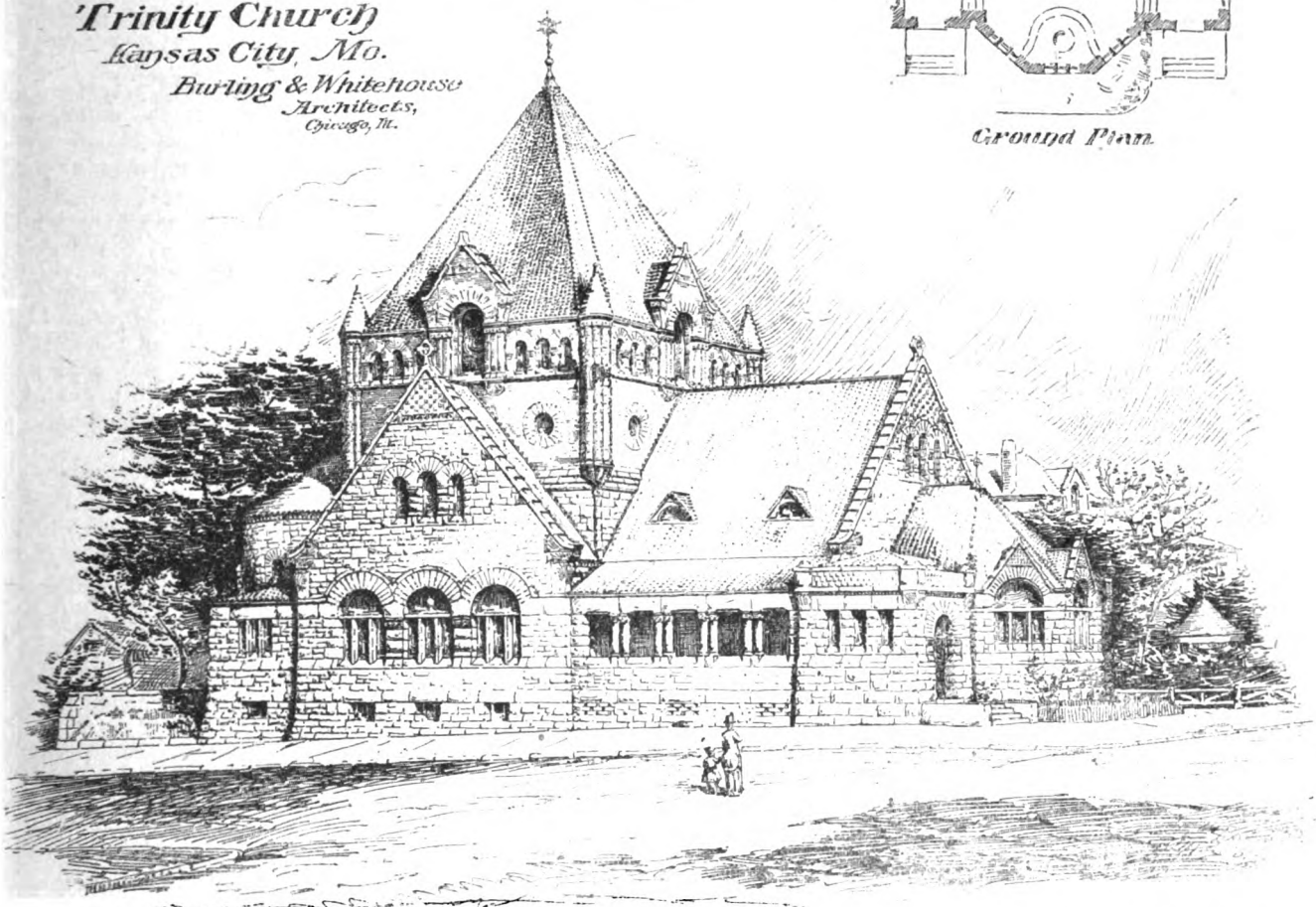
Interior of Lantern & Chancel

Trinity Church
Kansas City, Mo.

Burging & Whitelhouse
Architects,
Chicago, Ill.



Ground Plan



TRINITY CHURCH, KANSAS CITY, MO.

Just three years ago, the parish of Trinity church, Kansas City, was organized, the first service being held by the Rev. Robert Talbot, the present rector, in a little hall on the corner of Ninth Street and Forest Avenue. At this service fifteen persons were present. There was a nucleus of about

half a dozen communicants. This number has grown at the rate of about one hundred annually, so that the parish now numbers about 300 communicants. The new church edifice which they are about to erect on the corner of Tracey Avenue and Tenth Street, will be of rock-faced Colorado red-stone; the lantern will

The interior will be finished in cherry

wood of a deep red color, and harmonizing with the finish of walls, which will be covered with terra cotta tile of churchly design, twelve inches square, as also, the four massive arches which spring from large dwarf stone columns and support the lantern at the intersection of nave and transepts. The ceiling of the church, as also

1890 Ellis Ewe.pdf

THE
EWE-SPEAKING PEOPLES

OF THE
SLAVE COAST OF WEST AFRICA

THEIR
RELIGION, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, LAWS, LANGUAGES, &c.

BY
A. B. ELLIS,
MAJOR, FIRST BATTALION WEST INDIA REGIMENT;
AUTHOR OF "THE TSHI-SPEAKING PEOPLES OF THE GOLD COAST,"
ETC. ETC.

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL,
LIMITED.

1890.

[All rights reserved.]
S

CHAPTER XV.

PROVERBS AND FOLK-LORE.

THE Ewé-speaking peoples, like most races of West Africa, have a large collection of proverbs, one, at least, being provided for almost every circumstance in life; a peculiarity which is common to most peoples who have made but little progress in civilization, and amongst whom these trite aphorisms have great weight. The following are given as specimens:—

1. Stone in the water-hole does not feel the cold.

(Answers to our “Habit is second nature.”)

2. He who has to carry does not walk bent.
3. The hunchback does not sleep on his back.
4. He whose hand can meet no chair, sits on the ground.
5. If the short mat is not in a man’s hand, he sleeps standing.

(These are used to mean, “Accommodate yourself to circumstances.”)

6. A poor man can never become a priest.
7. Nobody sits by a fire and cries.

(This refers to the smoke from a wood fire getting into the eyes and giving the appearance of tears. It is used in the sense of, “Do not judge by appearances.”)

- { 8. Two eyes one has, but two things one does not see.
- { 9. Two ears you have, but two things you do not hear.
- { 10. Two arms you have, but two kinds of work you do not do at once.
- { 11. No one chases two birds.
(These mean, "You cannot do two things at once.")
- 12. Two men are not blockheads.
(Answers to, "Two heads are better than one.")
- 13. One man cannot serve two masters.
- { 14. A child and water are not together.
- { 15. Poor and rich do not go together.
- { 16. Water and fire are not together.
- 17. If a pregnant woman falls, the child in the womb answers.
(Means that nothing can be so carefully concealed that it will not be discovered, and is equivalent to "Murder will out.")
- 18. Whoever goes abroad does not hear family news.
- 19. As the child has not seen what happened before his birth, let him be satisfied with having it told him.
- 20. The stick you have in your hand is that with which you strike the snake.
(Means, "Make the most of your opportunities.")
- 21. Two kings do not rule in one town.
- { 22. A lurking dog does not lie in the hyena's lair.
- { 23. The goat does not pass the leopard's door.
- { 24. If the mouse be ever so drunk, he does not go to sleep in the cat's bed.

25. Clothes are men.

(Equivalent to, "The tailor makes the man.")

26. If the cloth be greasy, it is not burnt.

(Means, "Things might be worse.")

27. Riches buy slaves, but not life.

28. If the boy says he wants to tie water with a string, ask him if he means the water in the pot or in the lagoon.

(Means, "Answer a fool according to his folly.")

{ 29. No child of man knows the day of his death.

{ 30. The fowl in the coop does not know the day of his death.

(These refer to the uncertainty of life, but the second is used to remind slaves that they are liable to be sold at any time.)

31. A poor man's son does not brag.

32. Cowries are men.

(Equivalent to, "Money makes the man.")

{ 33. The dog does not look in the room and say—"Is that your father's property, or your mother's?"

{ 34. Have you ever buried a hunchback, and gone home?

(These two are used to inquisitive persons, and the second means that they might be curious to know in what position a hunchback would be laid in the grave.)

35. The guest does not surpass the host.

36. If water falls on a stone it does not trickle through it.

37. Fire devours the grass, but not the roots.

38. When the leopard sleeps you might think him dead.

- { 39. The shepherd's staff does not kill the sheep.
- { 40. The lash that drives the herd does not kill them.
- 41. The plantation owner takes away the wood, but not the rope.
 (The cut brushwood belongs to the man who clears the ground, and this proverb supposes the case of such a person finding some of the wood tied up in a bundle by somebody else, ready for removal. It is used in the sense of, "Take only what is your own," and also in that of, "Do not act in hot haste.")
- 42. The death of the suicide cannot be avenged.
- 43. A crab cannot become a bird.
 (Equivalent to, "You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.")
- 44. The elephant's tail is short, but with it he drives off the flies.
- 45. A cask of rum cannot roll itself.
- 46. A large shell (of the cowry species) cannot buy goods to the value of even two cowries.
 (The large cowry shells are not circulated as money. Equivalent to "Little and good.")
- 47. Nobody takes a trinket and hangs it round the neck of a wild bird.
- 48. What hangs in the hand goes not to the well.
 (Baskets with handles are carried in the hand, while other articles, such as water-pots, are carried on the head. The proverb means, "No one fetches water in a basket.")
- 49. Nobody unroofs the house in the town to roof the house in the plantation.
 (The town house is the ordinary abode, that in

the plantation being only a temporary shelter, used by the family during the intervals of rest from work.)

50. To despise one's equal is to despise oneself.

51. The hater is the murderer.

52. One tree does not make a forest,

(Answers to our, "One swallow does not make a summer.")

{ 53. Fire burns property, but not iron.

{ 54. The white ant devours everything except stones.

55. The crocodile's child does not die by drowning.

(Equivalent to, "What is one man's meat is another man's poison.")

56. The bird with a long bill eats things that are far off.

57. Nobody takes a tortoise or a crab to make a pad.

(The pad here referred to is that used to protect the head from the load carried on it.)

58. The stranger's son makes people angry.

(Refers to foreigners offending the prejudices of natives by laughing at their customs, which the young are more prone to do than the old; hence "stranger's son.")

59. Talk in the house makes no man excel.

(Equivalent to, "Deeds, not words.")

60. Politeness engenders friendship.

61. An empty hand does not go to market.

{ 62. The night comes on, then runs the mouse.

{ 63. The rat does not come out in the daylight.

64. If you are an orphan, and somebody gives his child instruction, take care to listen, so that you may profit by it.

65. To the potter belong the broken pieces.
(Means that nobody buys spoiled goods.)
66. Two big fish do not drink water in the hollow of one rock.
67. The poor man gets no goods without security.
68. Rain rolls things, but not stones.
69. The last one locks the door.
70. The part of the stick that is in the fire will be burned.
(Used to mean that punishment only falls on the guilty.)
71. Two men of sense do not try to divide three cowries.
72. The cock does not crow in the desert.
(Refers to the fact that a traveller can always know when he is approaching habitations by the crowing of cocks. This proverb and the next one are equivalent to our, "There is no smoke without fire.")
73. The palm-branch does not open its mouth without cause.
(Refers to the rustling noise made by palm-branches when agitated by the wind, which can be heard for some little distance.)
74. The diver does not know what is going on behind him.
(Used to a person who is seen without his being aware of it.)
75. Although a man looks back, he does not know what is on his back.
76. Follow the customs of your father. What he did not do, avoid doing, or you will harm yourself.

77. One man kills the elephant, and many villages eat it.

(When an elephant is killed, a rare occurrence now, as they have all been driven far inland, it is usual to divide the meat among the people of the neighbouring villages. The proverb is used to show that one person may benefit many.)

78. What went into the belly yesterday is not in the mouth to-day.

79. The eyes see things, but eat them not.

80. Where war is, there the drum will be.

81. Who wants to eat does not sit still.

82. The soup is sweet to the cat's mouth, even though she has no hand with which to raise it.

(Means, "So long as you have enough to eat, do not grumble at the mode in which it is put before you.")

83. Distant fire-wood is good fire-wood.

(Something like our, "Distance lends enchantment to the view.")

84. Nobody tells a sick man that he ought not to complain.

85. A boy looks for things, but not for *golo's* eggs.

(The *golo* is a kind of crane that builds its nest in the depths of impenetrable swamps. Means, "No one attempts the impossible.")

86. If the thief steals stolen goods, the dispute is not far off.

(Equivalent to, "Two of a trade never agree.")

87. A small thing is in your hand, but even that can make much blood flow.

(Refers to the serious injuries that may be in-

flicted with a small knife, and is used in the sense of, "Little beginnings often have big endings.")

88. A dog gnaws bones, but not stones.

89. Your grandmother does not correct you ; she sends you to your mother.

(Is a mode of telling people to mind their own business, the bringing up of a child being the business of the mother, though here, as elsewhere, grandmothers sometimes interfere to spoil the child.)

90. If the boy leaves his father's house, he cannot go to that of his mother.

(Boys remain under the care of the mother until they are old enough to be of service to the father, when they leave the maternal roof and live in the father's house. Is used to mean that the past is irretrievable.)

91. He who goes to the father need not go to the mother.

(The father being the superior.)

92. If the agriculturist does not go to his neighbour's plantation (and see him at work), he says, "I alone am working."

93. A seller of herbs does not sell them as grass.

(Means that nobody depreciates the value of his own wares.)

94. He who works for himself can do as he pleases.

95. Nobody makes a bargain to take the burden and pay the debts.

96. A small calabash does not sound like a big one.

(Is used to braggarts.)

97. Nobody eats cactus.

98. The python swallows creatures, but not porcupines.

(Used when a person is trying to make use of another as a "cat's-paw.")

99. The deaf and dumb man does not know when you call him.

100. A tree lopped of its branches does not move in the wind.

101. Blood is surely in a person's mouth before he swallows saliva.

(The Ewe native believes that by gathering saliva in the mouth he excites the blood, and to swallow saliva, instead of ejecting it, is a sign of anger or disgust. The proverb is something like our, "Coming events throw their shadows before them.")

102. The big water-pot goes not to the well.

(Used in the sense of, "The more haste, the less speed." The big water-pot here referred to is the large one that is half-buried in the ground near the house, and which contains the household supply of water for the day. It is filled with the water brought in smaller pots from the well, or spring, by the women.)

103. Take care, robbers, there is a sword in Dahomi.

(Used as a warning.)

{ 104. A boy counts things, but he does not count sand.

{ 105. A boy can count cowries, but he cannot count the stars.

(Sand and stars are commonly used to express a countless multitude.)

106. If a thorn goes into your foot, the hand pulls it out; but if a thorn goes into your hand the foot cannot pull it out.
107. If corn is put in the sun to dry, and not watched, will not the goats eat it?
(Used to reprove carelessness or imprudence.)
108. Every palm-leaf falls separately.
109. One palm-nut spoils all the palm-nuts.
(The red nuts of the wine-palm are used in stews, and one bad one spoils the whole mess. Used in much the same way as our, "Evil communications corrupt good manners.")
110. One belly eats something, another gets fat on it.
111. Fowls do not bring forth stones.
(Used to a person who is handling a fragile article roughly or carelessly.)
112. The mouth talks plenty that the heart does not say.
113. Mouse sitting in the palm-oil and lizard's head suspicious.
(The head of the male lizard is something of the colour of palm-oil. The proverb means that a suspicious person will always find something to suspect.)
114. The fruit falls under the tree.
(Equivalent to, "As you have sown, so you will reap.")
115. An amiable person is never good-for-nothing.
116. The head does not sit under, so that a knee can put on a hat.
(Used to check arrogance and assumption.)
117. Boy, I bind a tooth-amulet round your neck; but

you cannot trust yourself under the fangs (of a wild beast).

(The tooth-amulet is to guard the wearer from beasts of prey. The proverb is used to check rashness, or over-confidence.)

118. If the mouse gnaws stones, then the melon is frightened.

119. Respect the elders, they are our fathers.

120. Stones are heavy, but the pounding-stone is heavier.

(Refers to the stone pestle used for pounding corn, which is very heavy in proportion to its size. The proverb is equivalent to our, "Do not judge by appearances.")

The fables in vogue amongst the Ewe-speaking peoples, and of which there are a great number, are always material, and are in no way connected with metaphor. They are tales pure and simple, are not designed to account for events, or for phenomena in nature or life, and have no analogy with the moral fables which were once popular in Europe, and of which those of *Æsop* afford an example. They are merely stories of the adventures of beasts and birds, to whom the Ewe-speaking native ascribes a power of speech, and whose moral nature he conceives to be at least as analogous to that of man as their physical nature. This form of myth is probably primary, the allegory and moral lesson being added when a more advanced stage of civilization is reached.

These fables are usually recounted on moonlight

1891 Taylor Giryama.pdf

0

GIRYAMA

VOCABULARY AND COLLECTIONS

BY THE REV.

W. E. TAYLOR, M.A., F.R.G.S.,

²
MISSIONARY OF THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY IN EAST AFRICA.



LONDON:

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.

1891.

GIRYAMA RIDDLES.

[NDUMO ZA KIGIRYAMA.]

1. Baba wákot'a kizimba dzulu ya m'uyu.
Father nailed a beehive upon the baobab tree.
Ni p'ula.
It is the nose.
2. Bamba k'a lwayo.
[Mr.] Flat has no foot [pat].
Ni iwe.
It is a rock.
3. Choga m'zinga ts'ulu.
[Mr.] Fungus, going about the hillock.
Ni sikiro.
It is the ear.
4. Enda na kuno na-mi nenda na kuno, hukatunganane mugolokolo-ni.
You go this way, and I go that, and meet at the giant-bean stalk.
Ni fiho za kipesa.
The sticks in the house wall.
5. Fumo ra Mwa-Tela ridunga kosi-kosi.
Mwa-Tela's spear prods at either end.
Ni muts'i.
It is a pestle.
6. Fw-alume ahahu, akiuka mumwenga, k'afurya wari.
We are three men, (but) when one (of us) goes away, we get no rice to eat.
Ni mafigo.*
It is the three stones of the hearth.

[* Rikiuka mwenga garya mairi mut'u k'aadima kugit'ira chakurya : When one is gone, a man cannot cook food with the two that remain.]

7. Hawe nereka.
Grandmother, carry me on your back [like a babe].
 Ni uriri.
 It is a bedstead.
8. K'akilumika.
It is not to be bitten.
 Ni kikokora.
 It is the elbow.
9. K'akioneke.
It is not visible.
 Ni k'ogo.
 It is the back of the head.
10. K'akiuka-ts'i.
It never rises up from the ground.
 Ni kisima.
 It is a well.
11. Katango-tango iwe-ni.
A sort of a tiny melon on a rock.
 Ni nundu ya ng'ombe.
 It is the hump of a cow.
12. Kodza ra mugandi rágandiza-ts'i yosi.
The sycamore leaf has extended over the whole land.
 [Probably, Ni k'umbi-k'umbi ya dzitso.
 It is the eyelid.—COMPILER.]
 Usku ukidza nindalala.
 When evening comes I shall go to sleep.
13. K'uku wa baba ugwiza miya-ni.
Father's fowl has laid among the thorns.
 Ni ndimu.
 It is a lime-fruit.
14. Kubuma k'anda-k'anda.
Slapping out along-side [as children playing in a stream].
 Ni m'oho.
 It is fire.
15. Kurima m'nda m'bomu ela ukadza vuna loya.
Cultivating a big patch, but you come to reap (only) a handful.
 Ni nyere.
 It is the hair (when it is being shaved).

16. *Kwenda tsembera hata nikiangira nyumba-ni suti p'aka wa baba ku-m'gwira mukira.*
Walking about, at last I came into the house, and there was nothing for it but to catch hold of father's cat by the tail.
Ni k'aha ya madzi, kuhekera.
It is the water-ladle, to dip (the water) out with.
17. *Magoma mairi k'agalam'sanya.*
Two cows (lit. full-grown females), [and yet] they never salute.
Ni nyumba mbiri za kure na kure.
It is two houses that are far apart.
18. *Magoma mairi lwanda-ni.*
Two cows, in the open field.
Ni mahombo.
It is the breasts.
19. *Magoma mēri, kushindana!*
Two cows a-racing!
Ni magulu.
It is the legs.
20. *Mbala na mwana-we madzakugonyeza k'unde-zo.*
The antelope and her young one have finished up your beans for you.
Ni sago na lwalwa.
It is the upper and nether millstone.
21. *Mudhao mure k'aufunga k'uni.*
A long bond [indeed, but it] binds not the firewood.
Ni ngira.
It is a path.
22. *Mwa-Mbita, kilolongo!*
Son of Mbita, [put them] in a row!
Ni viguzo zha kipesa.
It is the posts in the house-wall.

THE END.

1894 Ellis Yoruba.pdf

THE YORUBA-SPEAKING PEOPLES

OF THE

SLAVE COAST OF WEST AFRICA

THEIR
RELIGION, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, LAWS, LANGUAGE, Etc.

WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING A COMPARISON OF THE
TSHI, GǼ, EWE, AND YORUBA LANGUAGES.

BY
A. B. ELLIS,
Lieut.-Colonel, First Battalion West India Regiment.
AUTHOR OF "THE TSHI-SPEAKING PEOPLES OF THE GOLD COAST"; "THE EWE-SPEAKING PEOPLES
OF THE SLAVE COAST"; "A HISTORY OF THE GOLD COAST OF WEST AFRICA,"
ETC., ETC.

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, L^d.

1894.

[*All rights reserved.*]

CHAPTER XIII.

PROVERBS.

THE Yorubas have an extraordinary number of proverbial sayings, and regard a knowledge of them as a proof of great wisdom, whence the saying, "A counsellor who understands proverbs soon sets matters right." They are in constant use, and another saying runs, "A proverb is the horse of conversation. When the conversation droops a proverb revives it. Proverbs and conversation follow each other." Several of the proverbs given in the volume on the Ewe-speaking peoples are known to and used by the Yoruba-speaking peoples; but they have hundreds of others which appear to be peculiar to themselves, and from these the following are taken as examples:—

1. Secrets should never be told to a tattler.
2. What is not wished to be known is done in secret.
3. He who has done something in secret, and sees people talking together, thinks they are talking of his action.
4. A whisperer looks suspiciously at the forest when he hears a noise, but the forest does not tell tales.

5. Rags make up a pad.
6. Continual sweepings make a dust-heap.
7. One here : two there : a great crowd.
8. One here : two there : the market is filled up.

(Nos. 5 to 8 are equivalent to our "Many a mickle makes a muckle.")

9. Boasting is not courage.
10. He who boasts much cannot do much.
11. Much gesticulation does not prove courage.
12. It is easy to cut to pieces a dead elephant.

(Nos. 9 to 12 resemble our "Deeds, not words.")

- 13. "I nearly killed the bird." No one can eat nearly in a stew.

(Answers to "Catch your hare before you cook him.")

14. A hog that has wallowed in the mud seeks a clean person to rub against.

15. A man in a white cloth is never looked for in the palm-oil market.

(Is something akin to "You cannot touch pitch without being defiled.")

16. The cross-roads do not fear sacrifices.

17. The sieve never sifts meal by itself.

18. Disobedience will drink water with his hands tied up.

19. Disobedience is the father of insolence.

20. Calamity has no voice ; suffering cannot speak to tell who is really in distress.

21. He who owns the inner square of the house is the master of the outer.

22. Peace is the father of friendship.

23. Strife never begets a gentle child.

24. He who forgives ends the quarrel.

25. A sharp word is as tough as a bow-string. A sharp word cannot be cured, but a wound may.

26. A peacemaker often receives blows.

27. There is no medicine against old age.

28. The *afomo* (a parasitical plant) has no roots; it claims relationship with every tree.

29. A man with a cough can never conceal himself.

30. Full-belly child says to hungry-belly child, "Keep good heart."

31. A jealous woman has no flesh upon her breast, for however much she may feed upon jealousy, she will never be satisfied.

32. Houses that are not adjacent do not readily catch fire.

33. Do not attempt what you cannot bring to a good end.

34. Each coloured cloth has its name.

35. He who marries a beauty marries trouble.

36. A man of the town knows nothing about farming, or the seasons for planting, yet the yam he buys must always be large.

37. A witch kills but never inherits.

38. Unless the tree falls you will never be able to reach the branches.

39. Another's eye is not like one's own.

40. The bite of the sand-fly is not so bad as poverty.

41. Poverty destroys a man's reputation.

42. A poor man has no relations.

43. Poverty never visits a poor man without visiting his children also.

44. The white man is the father of merchants, and want of money is the father of disgrace.

45. A man may be born to a fortune, but wisdom only comes with length of days.

46. People think that the poor are not so wise as the rich, for if a man be wise, why is he poor?

47. The appearance of the wise differs from that of the fool.

48. The labourer is always in the sun, the plantation-owner always in the shade.

(Answers to "One sows, another reaps.")

49. A lazy man looks for light employment.

50. Laziness lends assistance to fatigue.

51. The potsherd goes in front of the man who has taken embers on it from the fire.

(Means that every enterprise requires a leader.)

52. The partridge says: "What business has the farmer to bring his cloth here?" (fearing it may be a bird-trap). The farmer says: "How could I go to my farm without my cloth?"

(This means that there are two sides to every question.)

53. Ear, hear the other before you decide.

54. He who annoys another only teaches him to strengthen himself.

55. He who waits for a chance will have to wait for a year.

56. When the jackal dies the fowls do not mourn, for the jackal never brings up a chicken.

57. When fire burns in the bush, smuts fly into the town.

(Answers to "Evil communication corrupts good manners.")

58. Tale-bearing is the elder brother, vexation the younger.

59. He who knows a matter beforehand confuses the liar.

60. Time may be very long, but a lie will not go to forgetfulness.

61. A lie costs nothing to a liar.

62. A man walks calmly in the presence of his defamer; a man walks proudly in the presence of his slanderer, when he knows that the slanderer has only twenty cowries in his house.

63. To be trodden upon here, to be trodden upon there, is the fate of the palm-kernel lying in the road.

64. The sole of the foot is exposed to all the dirt of the road.

65. He who eats *akashu* does not know that a famine prevails.

(*Akashu* is a large ball of *agidi*, and hence emblematic of plenty.)

66. Consideration is the senior, calculation the junior, and wisdom the third-born.

67. Want of consideration and forethought made six brothers pawn themselves for six dollars.

(Instead of one brother pawning himself for the whole amount, in which case the others would be free to work and earn money with which to redeem him.)

68. An obstinate man soon falls into disgrace.

69. Inquiry saves a man from making mistakes. He who makes no inquiry gets himself into trouble.

70. Though a man may miss other things, he never misses his mouth.

71. Not to aid one in distress is to kill him in your heart.

72. Charity is the father of sacrifice.

73. Covetousness is the father of disease.

74. Never did our fathers honour an *orisha* of this kind.

(Is used to discountenance innovations.)

75. A white cloth and a stain never agree.

76. Thorns do not agree with the foot.

77. The stream may dry up, but the watercourse still keeps its name.

78. When water is poured on the head it finds its way down to the feet.

79. A gift is a gift, and a purchase is a purchase; so no one will thank you for saying "I sold it you very cheap."

80. Hawks go away for the nesting-season, and fools think they have gone away for ever.

81. Ashes fly back in the face of him who throws them.

(Is equivalent to our "Curses come home to roost.")

82. It is the path of the needle that the thread is accustomed to follow.

83. If a matter be dark, dive to the bottom.

84. He who is pierced with a thorn must limp off to him who has a knife.

85. Every man's character is good in his own eyes.

(This resembles "Self-praise is no recommendation.")

86. Wherever a man goes to dwell, his character goes with him.

87. Frogs' spawn does not attract the attention of the robber.

(Frogs' spawn is supposed to resemble a mass of beads.)

88. The white ant may well admire the bird, for it loses its wings after flying for only one day.

89. Gently! gently! still hurts the snail.

90. A bribe blinds the judge's eyes, for bribes never speak the truth.

91. A witness speaks the truth; a witness is not a partisan.

92. Iwo is the home of the grey parrot, Ibara the home of the hawk, but where is the home of the green parrot?

(Is used to persons making false pretences.)

93. Bank rises after bank, and ditch follows after ditch. When the rain falls into the ditch the banks are envious.

(Is said of those who are dissatisfied with their station in life.)

94. The strength of a mortar (made of wood) is not like the strength of a pot (made of clay). Place a mortar on the fire and it will burn; pound a yam in a pot and it will break.

(Means that there is a proper use for everything.)

95. When the monkey jumps from the tree he jumps into the house.

(Inculcates the danger of leaving one's proper station.)

96. A tick having fixed itself on the mouth of a jackal, a fowl was asked to take it off; but the fowl knew that she was food for the jackal just as the tick was for her.

97. Gossip is unbecoming in an elder.

98. Three elders cannot all fail to pronounce the word *ekulu*; one may say *ekúlu*, another *ekulú*, but the third will say *ekulu*.

(*Ekulu* is the name of an antelope. The saying means that there is safety in a number of counsellors.)

99. The younger should not thrust himself into the seat of the elders.

100. The young cannot teach the elders traditions.

101. As a calabash receives the sediment of the water, so must an elder exercise forbearance.

102. A man does not run among thorns for nothing. Either he is pursuing a snake or a snake is pursuing him.

103. As no subject may keep a herald, so it is not every man who may own a palace.

104. Everyone in the assembly has a name, but when you are summoned "in the name of the assembly" (instead of in the name of some individual in it) evil awaits you.

105. A near neighbour need not say good-bye till to-morrow.

106. A thing thrown forward will surely be overtaken, and a thing put in the ground will be there to be dug up; but if nothing has been thrown forward, what shall be overtaken? and if nothing has been buried, what shall be dug up?

(Is used to inculcate provident habits.)

107. The name given to a child becomes natural to it.

108. Gold should be sold to him who knows its value.

Q

109. Time is longer than a rope.

110. The dawn does not come twice to wake a man.

111. If clothes remain long in the bag they rot.

112. The *agbi* (a bird with blue plumage) is the dyer in blue; the *aluko* (a bird with purple plumage) is the painter of purple; but the *lekileki* (the white crane) is the owner of the white cloth.

(Means each to his own pursuits.)

113. When the rain fell upon the parrot the *aluko* rejoiced, thinking that the red tail of the parrot would be spoiled, but the rain only increased its brilliancy.

114. The *akala* (vulture) smells the carrion, no matter how high in the air he may be.

115. The bat hangs with his head down, watching the actions of the birds.

(Is used to inculcate silent observation.)

116. He that has copper ornaments looks after the lime; he that has brass ornaments looks after the *awedi*.

(The lime is used for cleaning copper and the *awedi* for cleaning brass.)

117. Though the *dengi* is cold on the top, yet the inside is very hot.

(*Dengi* is a kind of gruel made of pounded maize. The proverb means "Do not judge by appearances.")

118. A small bed will not hold two persons.

119. The elephant makes a dust and the buffalo makes a dust, but the dust of the buffalo is lost in that of the elephant.

120. Though you appear very sharp you cannot tell nine times nine.

121. A large morsel chokes a child.

122. He who cannot lift an ant, and yet tries to lift an elephant, will find out his folly.

123. He who tries to shake the trunk of a tree only shakes himself.

124. The world is the ocean and mankind is the lagoon. However well a man can swim he cannot cross the world.

(Nos. 119 to 124 are used to check presumption and over-confidence.)

125. When the *eya* (a wild cat) has reached to the ferocity of the leopard he will kill animals to feed on.

126. Though the fire is burning the walls do not shrink from it, and yet the fire is trying to burn the water.

(Is said of persons who aim at the greater when they cannot accomplish the less.)

127. The cry of the bird *kegio* does not reach the sky.

(Is used of one whose opinion or advice is not valued.)

128. Cocoa-nut is not good for a bird to eat.

(This is used in the same way as our "sour grapes.")

129. The bill-hook cuts the bush, but receives no profit from the bush. It clears the road, but receives no profit from the road. The bill-hook is badly bent, the bill-hook is badly bent. The bill-hook is bent; it pays five cowries to bind its neck (handle) with a ring. When the bill-hook reaches

its owner's farm with the ring on its neck, it is girded tightly for new works.

(This saying refers to the labour of slaves, which brings them no remuneration. In the original it forms a kind of verse. Thus:—

*Ada shan igbo,
Ko ri ere igbo.
O ro ona,
Ko ri ere ona.
Ada da ida kuda,
Ada da ida kuda.*

*Ada da ; o fi arun gbadi o di oko olowo.
Ada li eka cron gbadsa giri-giri.)*

130. The pot-lid is always badly off, for the pot gets all the sweet and the lid nothing but the steam.

(“Pot-lid” is here used to mean “slave.”)

131. Job-work is not the slave's first care ; the master's work has the first claim on his time.

132. A slave is not the child of a tree (*i.e.*, made of wood). When a slave dies his mother hears nothing of it, but when a free man dies there is mourning ; yet the slave, too, was once a child in his mother's house.

133. As the yam-flour was once a soft unripe yam, so was the slave once a child in his father's house.

134. Birth does not differ from birth ; as the free man was born so was the slave.

135. You find a hen in the market and hasten to buy her. Had she been worth keeping the owner would not have sold her.

(This is said in warning to any man who is about to buy a female slave.)

136. He who gathers locust-fruit spends the money of death.

(Is used to check rashness. The wood of the locust-tree breaks easily, and this proverb contemplates a man perched on a lofty limb to pick the fruit.)

137. A hunchback is never asked to stand up straight.

(That is, no one expects the impossible.)

138. He who has only an eyebrow for a bow can never kill an animal.

139. You cannot kill game by looking at it.

140. When the hawk hovers the fowl-owner feels uneasy.

141. No one carrying elephant-beef on his head should look for crickets underground.

(Elephant-beef here means the food of the rich, and crickets that of the poor. The saying means that the rich should not stoop to petty gains.)

142. No one should draw water from the spring in order to supply the river.

(This means that no poor man should stint himself in order to make presents to the rich.)

143. The glutton, having eaten his fill, then calls his companions to come also.

144. If you are not able to build a house at once, you first build a shed.

145. If one has not an *adan* (a large kind of bat), one sacrifices an *ode* (small bat).

(Nos. 144 and 145 mean "Do your best.")

146. If one is carrying water, and it gets spilt, so

long as the calabash is not broken one can still get more.

(Is used to encourage those who think a disaster irreparable.)

147. No snuff-seller likes to own that she sells bad tobacco, but all profess to sell tobacco as sweet as honey.

(“No one cries stinking fish.”)

148. The *esuo* (gazelle), claiming relationship with the *ekulu* (a large antelope), says his mother was the daughter of an *ekulu*.

149. If you abuse the *etu*, you make the head of the *awo* ache.

(The *etu* and the *awo* are two varieties of guinea-fowl. The proverb means that people do not like to hear their relations badly spoken of.)

150. He runs away from the sword and hides himself in the scabbard.

(This answers to our “Out of the frying-pan into the fire,” as the sword will return to the scabbard.)

151. The sword shows no respect for its maker.

152. The spoon, seeing death, ventures his head into it.

(That is, into the boiling fluid. The proverb is used to check rashness.)

153. After the *agbeji* has saved men from starving, it is thought only fit to be cut into a common calabash.

(The *agbeji* is a kind of calabash-gourd, which ripens early in the season, when vegetables are scarce. When over-ripe it is bitter to the taste. The saying is used to reprove ingratitude.)

154. The *agbeji* is never bitter in a large family.

(This resembles "Hunger is the best sauce.")

155. Leprosy, desiring to disfigure a man, attacks the tip of his nose.

(Said of one who tells the faults of another in public.)

156. The first-born is due to the sheep-owner.

(This answers to "Give to each one his due." It refers to a custom by which, when ewes are put in charge of a shepherd, he receives in payment a certain proportion of the young, after the first-born.)

157. Contraction of words conceals the sense.

(The Yorubas talk habitually with great rapidity, contracting words, and often not giving themselves time to think of the proper word to use. Hence, the meaning of what they say is very often obscure, and their conversation is in consequence continually interrupted by the question "*Ogbo?*" "Do you understand?" literally, "Do you hear?")

158. When the face is washed you finish at the chin.

(This is a saying used when a dispute is ended. It means, "Well, that's settled.")

159. No one should ask the fish what takes place on the land, nor should the rat be asked what takes place in the water.

160. A large cock does not allow a small one to crow.

161. A rock is the father of stones.

162. Two rams cannot drink out of the same calabash.

163. No one will throw away antelope-venison to pick up squirrel-meat.

164. When the spider intends to attack you it encircles you with its web.

165. The deaf look with surprise at a speaker's mouth.

166. Although you are about to die, need you split up the mortar for firewood?

(Means, have some consideration for others.)

167. "To-day I am going; to-morrow I am going," gives the stranger no encouragement to plant the *ahusa* (a plant which bears fruit very rapidly).

168. What good have the gods done to the hunchback that he should name his child Orishagbemi (the gods have blessed me)?

(This means, why should one return thanks when unkindness only has been experienced?)

169. He who does not understand the cry of the palm-bird (*ega*) complains of the noise it makes.

(Means that people are prone to condemn what they do not understand.)

170. A large cock, crowing in the middle of the night, settles the dispute (as to what the time is).

171. A lame man said the load on his head was not properly balanced, and was told "Its unevenness began from the ground" (*i.e.*, from his lame leg).

(This is used to reprove those who find fault when the fault really lies with them.)

172. When the bush is on fire the pigeon leaves the grass; when the fire is extinguished everyone returns home.

173. The *akpena* says to the cotton, "Do not hang your trouble round my neck."

(The *akpena* is a kind of spindle, on which spun cotton is wound for sale. The proverb is used to one who is involving another in a difficulty.)

174. The *aro* does not bear its load for ever; sooner or later it will put it down.

(The *aro* is the hearth, or fire-place, consisting of three rounded cones of clay, between which the fire is lighted, and on which the cooking-pot rests. The proverb means, "Sooner or later matters must mend.")

175. Self-conceit deprives the wasp of honey.

176. He who begs with importunity will obtain what he wants.

177. The pond stands aside, as if it were not related to the river.

(Is used to reprove pride.)

178. The *ago* (a striped rat noted for its cunning) is caught in a trap, how much more then the *malaju* (a water-rat remarkable for its stupidity).

179. The *ajao* (flying-fox) is neither rat nor bird.

(Is used of a person who remains neutral during a quarrel.)

180. When a Mohammedan is not pinched with hunger he says, "I never eat monkey."

181. The rat has no voice to call the cat to account.

182. When the man on the stilts falls, another hand gets possession of the sticks.

183. One man makes bill-hooks and others use them.

184. If you send no one to the market the market will send no one to you.

185. There is no tallness among pigeons; they are all dwarfs.

186. No one would expose fowls on the top of a rock in sight of a hawk.

187. The rat does not show his companion the hole in the roof.

(Each one for himself.)

188. You cannot shave a man's head in his absence.

(This means that a matter cannot be settled in the absence of the people concerned.)

189. A bald-headed man does not care for a razor.

190. A mouth not keeping shut, and lips not keeping close, bring trouble to the jaws.

(Answers to our "Speech is silver, but silence is gold.")

191. With the forefinger one takes up the sauce.

192. A chicken having been delivered from death (*i.e.*, from the hawk) by being shut up, complained because it was not allowed to feed openly on the dust-heap.

193. The dog that is known to be very swift is the one chosen to catch the hare.

194. If the dog has his master behind him he will not be afraid of the baboon.

195. An old dog cannot be taught.

196. The butcher pays no regard to any particular breed of animals.

(That is, "All is fish that comes to his net.")

197. A rogue never closes the mouth of his wallet.

198. The birdlime is the death of the bird.

199. When the shin-bone is not hurt, it says it has no flesh to protect it.

(This means, "You do not know what you can do till you try.")

200. Working in competition quickens the hands.

201. The coloured calico deceives the country-cloth, but it is not really what the country-cloth takes it to be, for the thread is fine.

(Country-cloth, that is, native-made cotton-cloth, is only dyed to disguise its coarseness, and it is here represented as imagining that coloured calico is coloured for the same reason. The proverb means that first impressions are often erroneous.)

202. He who goes into a river may fear, but the river does not fear.

203. No one confesses that he has eaten yam with a knife that is missing.

204. A fool of Ika and an idiot of Iluka meet together to make friends.

("Birds of a feather flock together.")

205. The palm of the hand deceives no one.

(This answers to our "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.")

206. No matter how well an idol is made, it must have something to stand on.

(Is used like our "There is no smoke without fire.")

207. Though the host may be obliged to eat *gbingbindo*, the guest expects at least to be given a handful of corn.

(The fruit of the *gbingbindo* is only eaten in time of famine. The proverb is used to check unreasonable demands.)

208. When a fish is killed its tail is put in its mouth.

(Is said of those who reap the fruit of their own misdeeds.)

209. Thanks are due to the shoulders which keep the shirt from slipping off.

210. As one is walking, so is he met.

211. The monkey is sure to tear the cloth of any-one who resembles himself.

212. An accident is not like a result that is foreseen.

213. One lock does not know the wards of another.

214. If the stomach is not strong, do not eat cockroaches.

215. The pangolin dwelt in a forest, not in a plain.

(This is a mode of saying that a person is bashful.)

216. If a man powerful in authority should ill-treat you, smile at him.

217. He who claps hands for a fool to dance is no better than the fool.

218. When the *agbali* is overpowered, there remains only the strength of the *arabi* to be overcome.

(The *agbali* and *arabi* are two insects which, it is popularly believed, are always found in company.)

219. The thumb cannot point straight forward.

(Is used when a person has been detected in some deceit.)

220. To prostrate oneself and keep the elbows close (to the side) does something for you.

(This resembles our saying about holding a candle to the devil.)

221. The trader never acknowledges that he has

sold all his goods. When asked, he will only say, "Trade is a little better."

222. Everything has a price, but who can put a price on blood ?

223. Famine compels one to eat the fruit of all kinds of trees.

("Necessity knows no law.")

224. A fugitive does not stop to pick the thorns from his foot, neither does he make choice of his sauce.

225. The ground-pig (bandicoot) said: "I do not feel so angry with the man who killed me, as with the one who dashed me on the ground afterwards."

• ("Insult adds to injury.")

226. Never take hold of a man who has a drawn knife in his hand.

227. By labour comes wealth.

228. A thief is more merciful than a fire.

229. Odofin tells a bigger lie than Aro.

Aro says he dropped his needle in the water ;

Odofin says he heard the splash of it.

230. A knife cannot be so sharp as to sharpen its own handle.

231. Joy has a small body.

232. Number one always precedes number two.

233. The horse never refuses a homeward gallop.

234. The wife saying, "I am going to see my mother," deceives the husband.

235. He who waits to see a crab wink will tarry long upon the shore.

236. The butterfly that brushes against thorns will tear its wings.

237. If an *orisha* would kill a man for cooking an unpalatable soup, what would become of those who cook nothing at all?

238. A rat that has a navel is a witch.

239. That which a child likes never injures its stomach.

240. Quick loving a woman means quick not loving a woman.

(“Marry in haste and repent at leisure.”)

241. One cannot show darkness by pointing it out.

242. The greater covers the less.

243. Ropes are entangled when goats are tied to the same post.

244. Hilts are unconscious of the strain to which the blades are subjected.

245. We say, “Know it who can.” The knower will know.

(“The cap fits.”)

246. Without bad news there is no sadness of heart.

247. The dove would not eat the ground-nuts, or the crow the white beans.

(“One man’s food is another man’s poison.”)

248. Health is the stepping-stone to wealth.

249. Dada cannot fight, but he has a brave brother.

250. As a girl is, so is her “head-money.”

Many of the proverbial sayings run in couplets, and resemble in construction some of those found in the Hebrew Book of Proverbs, the object being to estab-

lish an antithesis between two consecutive lines, in which noun is made to answer to noun, and verb to verb. For instance, compare :—

The simple inherit folly,
But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
(Proverbs xiv. 18).

A gracious woman retaineth honour,
And strong men retain riches.
(Proverbs xi. 16.)

with the following Yoruba aphorisms :—

1. Ordinary people are as common as grass,
But good people are dearer than the eye.
2. A matter dealt with gently is sure to prosper,
But a matter dealt with violently causes vexation.
3. Familiarity induces contempt,
But distance secures respect.
4. The public assembly belongs to the town,
But a select council belongs to the king.
5. Anger does nobody good,
But patience is the father of kindness.
Anger draws arrows from the quiver,
But good words draw kola-nuts from the bag.
6. A fruitful woman is the enemy of the barren,
And an industrious man is the foe of the lazy.
7. Beg for help, and you will meet with refusers ;
Ask for alms, and you will meet with misers.
8. A wild boar in the place of a hog would ravage
the town,
And a slave, made king, would spare nobody.
9. When there are no elders the town is ruined,
And when the master dies the house is desolate.

10. The absence of powder converts a gun into a stick,
And the death of a father causes the dispersion
of his children.
11. The sharpness of an arrow is not like that of a
razor,
And the wickedness of a horse is not like that
of a man.
12. A pistol has not a bore like a cannon,
And a poor man has not money like a rich.
13. Sorrow is after weeping,
And mortification is after trouble.
14. To-day is the elder brother of to-morrow,
And a heavy dew is the elder brother of rain.
15. A ram's mane gives him a noble appearance,
And a father's honour makes a son proud.
16. No one can separate the *agbali* from the *arabi*,*
And no one can deprive a man of his inheritance.

The Yoruba-speaking peoples are fond of composing punning sentences, made up of words having similar sounds but different meanings. Thus :—

(1) *Abebi ni ibe iku.*

Abebi ni ibe orun.

Bi oru ba mu abebi ni ibe e.

Abebi means a fan, an advocate, or an intercessor,
and the above is

An intercessor (with the gods) wards off death.

An advocate (with the judge) wards off punishment.

A fan wards off the heat when it is hot.

* See Proverb 218.

(2) *Igun ti ogun mi ko jo ti egun.* "Stabbing is not like pricking me with a thorn." The play here is in the resemblance between the words *igun*, *ogun*, and *egun*.

(3) *Bi alapata ba pa eran, awon alagbata abu u li ajan.* "When the butcher kills the animal the retailers cut it into pieces." Here the play is upon the words *alapata* (butcher) and *alagbata* (pedlar, retailer, petty trader).

(4) The following is on the words *bata* (shoes), *bata-bata* (an onomatopœic word like our "patter patter"), *apata* (rock), *ajulabata* (chief drummer), and *bata* (a long drum):—

Ojo pa bata, bata-bata-bata, li ori apata; li ode ajulabata, bata ni igi, bata li awo.

"The rain on the *bata* (shoes), goes patter, patter, patter, as on the *apata* (rock); in the street of *ajulabata*, the *bata* (drum) is wood, the *bata* (shoes) are of hide."

(5) *Igba dodo li agbado, igba ni?* "What supports the people if it is not maize?" Here the play is on *igba dodo* and *agbado*.

It is a favourite game to repeat as fast as possible sentences difficult to pronounce, like the following:—

Iyan mu ire yo; iyan ro ire ru. "When there is famine the cricket is fat" (that is, is considered good enough to eat); "when the famine is over the cricket is lean" (*i.e.*, is rejected).

Kanakana ba kanakana ja, kanakana da kanakana. "The crow met the crow and fought, the crow beat the crow."

The two following are examples of a play of a different sort :—

(1) The cry of the squirrel sounds like the word *korokoro*, whence “It was the squirrel’s own mouth that betrayed her, for when she had brought forth two young ones she carried them to the roadside and said, “My children are very sound, very sound, very sound” (*Omo mi ije korokoro, korokoro, korokoro.*)

(2) The cry of the bush-fowl (partridge) resembles the words *kiki ora*, “nothing but fat”; hence the saying, “With its mouth the bush-fowl declares its fatness, crying, ‘Nothing but fat! Nothing but fat.’” (*Kiki-ora! Kiki-ora.*)

Riddles are sufficiently common, but few of them are good. The following are examples :—

Q. A small confined room, with hardly anything in it but pegs.

A. The mouth, with the teeth.

Q. An associate who cannot be tamed.

A. Fire.

Q. There is no market in which the dove with the prominent breast has not traded.

A. The cowry.

Q. A hen that has many chickens.

A. The Milky Way.

Q. I am long and slim, I am engaged in commerce, and yet I never reach the market.

A. The canoe (which carries the goods but stops at the landing-place).

1896 Sibree Malagasy.pdf

MADAGASCAR BEFORE THE CONQUEST

THE ISLAND, THE COUNTRY, AND THE PEOPLE

WITH CHAPTERS ON TRAVEL AND TOPO-
GRAPHY, FOLK-LORE, STRANGE CUSTOMS
AND SUPERSTITIONS, THE ANIMAL LIFE
OF THE ISLAND, AND MISSION WORK
AND PROGRESS AMONG THE INHABITANTS

BY THE
REV. JAMES SIBREE, F.R.G.S.

Missionary of the L.M.S.

AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT AFRICAN ISLAND," "A MADAGASCAR BIBLIOGRAPHY,"
"THE BIRDS OF MADAGASCAR," ETC.

*WITH MAPS AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS*

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN CO.

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN

1896

great solemnity, within the palace, when she announced her intention of making a valuable present to each of the two princes. Two fine vases or covered vessels were placed on the table, and the two young men were called in; the elder was first directed to choose which he would have. He did so, and on opening the vase it was found to contain some beautiful gems and valuable ornaments. The younger, her own son, then opened his vase, and found it contained only a handful of earth. The queen then addressed the assembly, saying that the elder prince was to be advanced to high honour and riches in the land; but, as the land could not be divided, the younger prince, who had received from God the handful of earth, should be her successor. (He eventually became king under the name of Radàma II., but only reigned about eighteen months.)

SECTION II.: RIDDLES AND CONUNDRUMS.—The second division of Mr. Dahle's book consists of about three hundred Malagasy proverbs, here called "Shorter clever Speeches resembling Proverbs"; but, as this branch of native wisdom and observation really requires a separate paper in order to do it justice, we shall not here give extracts from this part of the book. Besides which, it will be necessary to take illustrations from larger collections than this supplementary one from the work we are chiefly using as a text-book.

The third and fourth sections of the book comprise a small collection of Malagasy riddles and conundrums, *Fampànononana* and *Safidy*, the latter meaning "choosings," two somewhat similar things being offered for choice in enigmatical language. Such playing upon words is a favourite amusement of the people; and, as some of them show considerable shrewdness a few examples may be given, all of them beginning with the question, *Inona àry izàny?* ("What then is this?").

1. At night they come without being fetched, and by day they are lost without being stolen?

The stars ; for, according to the common belief, they go completely away from their places by day.

2. Cut down, and yet not withering ?

Hair, when cut off.

3. Six legs and two feet (lit., "soles") ?

Money scales, which have always three strings (legs) for each pan, which is called in native idiom its "tongue," but in the riddle is compared to a foot.

4. Lying on the same pillow, but not on the same bed ?

The rafters of a roof, which lean on the same ridge-piece (or pillow), but rest (that is, the opposite sides) on different wall-plates (or beds).

5. Coarse rofia cloth outside and white robe inside ?

The manioc root, which has a brown skin, but very white floury substance, here contrasted with the ordinary native habit of wearing coarse and often dirty clothing below, and a fine white cloth or *lamba* over all.

6. If boiled, never cooked ; but if roasted, ready directly ?

Hair.

7. Cannot be carried, but can easily be removed ?

The public road ; for, until quite recently, there have been no rights of way in Madagascar, and any one can divert a path as he may please.

8. Fetch the dead on which to place the living ?

Ashes and fire, alluding to the common native practice of fetching a live coal or two in a handful of ashes.

9. Standing erect he gazes on heaven (lit., "the Creator") ; stooping down he gazes on the oxen's footprints ?

Rice, which while growing stands erect, but when ripe bends downwards.

10. Its mother says, Let us spread out our hands, but its children say, Let us double up our fists ?

The full-grown fern and the young fern shoots, alluding to the rounded knobs at the heads of the latter, compared with the outspread fronds of the plant when full grown.

11. The foot above the leg ?

The leaves of the horirika, an edible arum, whose broad leaf is compared to a foot and its stalk to a leg.

12. Cut, and yet no wound seen ?

A shadow and water.

13. The mother says, Let us stand up, but the children say, Let us lie across ?

A ladder and its rungs; the latter are called "children of the ladder" (*zàna-tòhatra*).

14. Has a mouth to eat with, but has no stomach to retain food ?

A pair of scissors. A cutting edge is called in native idiom its "tongue" (*léla*).

15. God's little bag, whose stitching is invisible ?

An egg.

16. Living on dainties, yet never fat ?

A lampstand, which is continually fed with fat.

17. Earth under the person, the person under dry grass, dry grass under water, and water again surrounded by earth?

A water-carrier and the waterpot he (or she) carries, together with a ring of dry grass used as a pad for the waterpot, the water carried, and the earthen sîny or pot enclosing the water.

18. When the little one comes the great one takes off its hat?

The great store waterpot in a house, from which the straw cover or hat is removed when water is drawn with a horn or tin ladle.

19. Dead before it begins to bluster?

A drum, referring to the bullock's skin of which it is made.

20. Many shields, many spears, yet cannot protect wife and children?

The lemon tree, alluding to the spines on the branches and the round fruits.

In the appendix to the book three specimens of conundrum games are given, the custom being for the proposer to mention first a number of things from a dozen to thirty, calling upon the rest of the party to guess what they are when he has done. In the first of these a number of insects, birds, and household objects are mentioned by some more or less vague description of them, such as: Adornment of the sovereign? *The people.* Horns (*i.e.*, protection) of the people? *Guns.* Top-knot of the town? *A big house.* Two-thirds of his sense gone before he gets arms and legs? *A tadpole*, when it changes to a frog; &c.

In the second game all the different parts of an ox are described in an enigmatical way, thus: God's pavement? *Its teeth.* Two lakes at the foot of a tree? *Its eyes.* Continually fighting but never separating? *Its lips.* Blanket worn day and night and can't be torn? *Its skin*; &c.

In the third game occur the following: Fragrance of the forest? *Ginger.* Fat of the trees? *Honey.* The lofty place,

a safe refuge from the flood? *Antanànarivo*. The lofty place good for sheltering? *Ambòhimànga*.¹ Rising up and not questioned? *The roof-posts of a house*: for a native, when rising up from the mat, would invariably be asked, *Ho aiza moa hianao*? ("Where are you going?").

¹ Because of the woods which clothe the slopes of the hill.

1897 Ruskin Bamongo.pdf

PROVERBS, FABLES, SIMILES AND SAYINGS

OF THE

BAMONGO.

TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED,

Giving the *nearest* equivalent in English.

A. E. RUSKIN.

BONGANDANGA, 30617

July, 1897.

EAST LONDON INSTITUTE
FOR HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.
HARLEY HOUSE, BOW, LONDON.



“ Banoju nt’iak’ elo.”

Analysis — Banoju Children (boys).
nta not.
(l)iaka knoweth
elo sorrow, suffering, etc., etc.

Equivalent.—The inexperienced cannot truly sympathise with sufferers, etc.

“ Boloi yoko bo fo ten ’otai.”

Anal.—Boloi..... Company, crowd, etc.
? yoko either yoko or oko ??
bo it, or they.
fo not.
tena cut, divide.
botai..... net(a)

Equiv.—Clannism, confederacy, cliquish, etc.

“ Ba ki ’amato bau coa baende.”

Anal.—Ba They.
ki were.
bamato..... females (women).
bau they.
coa go to (become).
baende males (men.)

Equiv.—They who were weak have become strong.

A contemptuous saying of scoffers, who are angry because women and children are considered and helped by the missionaries.

“Bonoju a tanga bofaiya ok’ise nk’okwala.”

Anal.—Bonoju boy-child.
a he.
bofaiya stranger, visitor.
oki of, etc.
ise father.
nko only.
bokwala a slave.

A boy’s contempt for his father’s visitor, whom he considers to be equal to a slave.

“Ifulu nta fondaka ndajiko au fondaka ndasi.”

Anal.—Ifulu Bird (a):
nta not.
fondaka decay, putrefying, etc.
ndajiko above.
au it.
fondaka decay, putrefying, etc.
ndasi below.

A Simile.—He will come back to his home—to where he fares best, etc.

“Ifulu nta kilaka ikeli a t’ene elele.”

Anal.—Ifulu Bird (a).
nta not.
kilaka abstain from.
ikeli a small stream, or rivulet.
a it.
tafo not.
(l)ena see.
elele a hole in a hollow tree, containing water.

The bird will not leave the stream until it has found water in a more secluded spot.

A Simile.—A wise man who is in a hard and poor situation will not leave it unless he has found a better one.

“Bauta b'omende nta coaka l'osumo.”

Anal.—Bauta Fat.
 ba of.
 bomende antelope (a species of).
 nta not.
 coaka go=goeth.
 la by.
 bosumo praise, flattery.

Equiv.—The price of this article is more than flattery.
 (Or) Flattery will not secure for us this coveted article.

“Lankesa o taf 'ena nköla.”

Anal.—Lankesa . . . Early morning.
 o you.
 tafo not.
 (l)ena see
 nköla nails (finger).

Equiv.—Before sunrise. Before you have seen your finger nails.

“O cik 'elaka tofele.”

Don't forget.

“Au tenya botema mö.”

Anal.—Au He.
 tenya.. cuts, divides.
 botema..... Stomach, seat of the affections.
 inner man, etc.
 mö ! (an exclamation, an interjection
 of surprise).

Equiv.—To part with a thing reluctantly.

“O kama nkele ngole ekucu lai?”

Anal.—O You.
 kama full, pressed, etc., etc.
 nkele anger, rage,
 ngole like
 ekucu calabash.

A Simile.—To be very angry, to be filled with anger or rage like a calabash filled with water.

“O n ambela wela.”

To betray, backbite, etc.

“Bofala w’emi o sing’otai.”

Anal.—Bofala Antelope (an)
 w’emi it stands.
 o you.
 singa make.
 botai net (a),

Equiv.—Offered opportunity neglected. Missed opportunity, etc.

“To lénana ngoki wat ’efikere.”

Anal.—To We.
 léna .. } part, separate.
 „ ana .. } [reciprocal form].
 ngoki [which was] like.
 watu canoe (a).
 efikere a stump of a tree.

The canoe never again meets the stump of the tree from which it was cut—they part for ever.

Equiv.—Separation, part, never to meet again.

“Bombölö bo fend 'auyi 'te.”

Anal.—Bombölö a small animal which lives in a tree.

bo it.

fenda cause to pass over.

bauyi noise, cry, whine, etc.

bete trees.

The small animal makes its cry or whine to pass over the trees, and can be heard a great way off during the dead of the night.

Equiv.—Great swelling words of brag are heard from the braggart or vain person. Small and unimportant, but plenty of noise.

Said to—a braggart.

“Bombito nt'enaka dilenga dikai.”

Anal.—Bombito Snake (a certain species).

nta not.

enaka seeth.

dilenga the white spot which is under its neck.

dikai his.

The “bombito” cannot see the white spot which is under its own neck, but others can.

Equiv.—We see not ourselves as others see us. We see not our own badness, but other people do.

Said to—a self-righteous person.

“Nta limbaka o le nd 'etoko bokwa.”

Anal.—Nta not (neg.)
 limbaka deceive (indefinite).
 o you.
 le are.
 nda at.
 etoko spring.
 bokwa salt.

The man who is making salt at the spring, and has promised to give you some, will not be able to deceive you ; for as he returns home he will have to pass your house.

Equiv.—“ Be sure your sin will find you out.” Be sure your deception will be discovered.

“Bokwa lokutu a tanelaka mpela.”

Anal.—Bokwa Salt.
 lokutu tardiness, slow, etc.
 a he.
 tanelaka finds, sees.
 mpela wet season.

The salt can only be got when the river is low.

A procrastinator puts off cutting until the floods come and cover it. (W. J. S.)

“Ikeji nta tefilaka isungu nto kwela.”

Anal.—Ikeji a small stream.
 nta not.
 tefilaka moves, splash, etc.
 isungu stick.
 nto not.
 kwela fallen in.

Equiv.—There must be a cause.

**“O yo unde liko, o yo öfwa, nta
kwake.”**

Anal.—

O	.....	who (he).
yo	.....	to.
unde	.....	climbs.
liko	.....	creeper.
o	.....	who.
yo	.....	to.
öfwa	.....	thinks, considers.
nta	.....	not.
kwake	.....	falls.

He who climbs a tree cautiously falls not.

Equiv.—“Look before you leap”.

**“Nkumbu eki fafa, o mpime
mpau lela; bofambe nta
tongaka ilombe nda din-
gongo.”**

Anal.—

Nkumbu	....	Saying, etc.
eki	.....	of.
fafa	.....	father.
o	.....	you.
m	.....	me.
(p)ime	.....	denv, refuse to give.
mpau	.....	shall not.
lela	.....	cry.
bofambe	....	food.
nta	.....	not.
tongaka	....	builds.
ilombe	.....	house.
nda	.....	in.
dingongo	....	throat.

Equiv.—The day is coming when you may need food.

Said to—a selfish person who has refused to help one in need.

Equiv.—Death is no respecter of persons.

“Nkema yo la besele.”

Monkeys only eat "besele" when they are tired and weary (while the sun is hot).

Equiv.—Worn out, weary with work, tired, exhausted, etc.

“Basi binol’ ofumbo.”

Anal.—Basi Water.
binola to cause to come up out of water,
 raise.
bofumbo a fallen branch or tree, partly in
 water.

The force of the current makes the fallen tree to move upwards, to rise and fall in the river.

Simile of Confederacy.

Said of a witness (in discussing a palaver) who speaks in favour of the accused (it being known that there is a mutual understanding between them).

“Mboka e fa wo coa wo ala jeva lai?”

<i>Anal.</i> —Mboka	Road, path.
e	it.
fa	not.
we, o	you.
coa	to go.
we, o	you.
ala	to look in order to direct the mind or attention, to consider, be- hold.
jeva	Sun (the).
lai	why?

Equiv.—Pretension, hypocrisy.

Said to one who is pretentious, and one who feigns to be what he is not.

“Emwaweta nta alaki ifele.”

<i>Anal.</i> —Emwaweta ..	A smiling, etc.
nta	not.
alaki	looked.
ifele	pit or trap for catching animals.

Equiv.—Not all who appear to be satisfied are happy. Not all who seem to be in possession of wealth are really possessors.

“To loma oki jelo.”

<i>Anal.</i> —To	We.
loma	rest.
oki	at, on.
jelo	sand bank.

Night comes on, and we rest thinking that we have reached land. But during the night a storm bursts upon us, and then we discover that we are on a sand-bank.

Equiv.—Resting in a false hope.

“Ba ko liela w’ena, o tungama : bosa wai ?”

Anal.—Ba They.
 ko you.
 liela shew, cause to appear, etc.
 we you
 (l)ena to see.
 o you.
 tungama to be bound.
 bosa groaning, sighing, etc.
 wai why ?

They warned him, and now he is bound his groaning is in vain.

Equiv.—Sudden calamity overtakes the heedless, and then their groaning and weeping will be in vain.

“Wamb’ene o ya yeka to öfela ke botöma.”

Anal.—Wambo Continue to, etc.
 (l)ena see.
 ya come ?
 yeka eat, be full ?
 to } forget not.
 öfela-ke .. }
 botöma mastication of food with a dry-
 ness of mouth, from eating
 manioc only.

Equiv.—Now is the day of plenty, but remember the days of poverty are coming.

Said to the extravagant and selfish.

“Yumba e coaki e lenya, lokuso lo sila.”

Anal.—

Yumba	Thing (a).
e	it.
coaki.....	lost, disappeared.
e'	it.
lenya	seen, appears.
lokuso	seeking, search.
lo	it.
sila	finished, ended.

There is no need to seek further for a thing which was lost after it is found.

Equiv.—Satisfaction, Free from care and anxiety.

“Bontu nta waka a lifelo ja nyango au waka ek 'antu!”

Anal.—

Bontu	Man, person.
nta	not.
waka.....	to die.
a	he.
la'ifelo	(on) the knee (with).
ja	of.
nyango.....	mother.
au	he,
waka.....	dies (dieth).
eka	at.
bantu	people (indefinite).

A Simile. —

Equiv.—Safety, security, confidence, etc.

“ O kenza liswa o kudza bonkumo lai? ”

<i>Anal.</i> — O	.....	You.
kenza	.....	give away, bestow, etc.
liswa	.....	axe (an).
o	.....	you.
kudza	.....	listen (for), attend to.
bonkumo	....	report, sound, or echo of chopping.
lai	.....	why?

Equiv.—A reproof to those who regret having given a present.

“ Bolika au yaki la mpö! ”

<i>Anal.</i> — Bolika	.....	A stone of the palm nut
au	.....	he, it.
yaki	.....	came.
la	.....	by, with.
mpö	.....	rat.

The palm nut stones are collected and brought together by rats.

Equiv.—Contempt for a stranger or visitor whom they consider has come for what he can get.

“ O kund' 'ona nyang 'oka nkele.”

<i>Anal.</i> —O	.....	You.
kunda	.....	strike, hit, etc.
bona	.....	child.
nyango	.....	mother (the).
loka	.....	feel.
nkele	.....	anger, rage.

Equiv.—Parental love. Sympathy

“Sake ntianaka!”

Anal.—Sake A sudden surprise.

nta not.

(l) ianaka.... known.

Equiv.—There is no warning before a surprise to prepare us for it.

A *reason* why we should be prepared for a surprise: because it gives no previous notice of its coming!

“Mbula nko isangia nk'alondo.”

Lit.—A sudden shower of rain, without warning.

“Nta coaka mpau la wango oka webi.”

Anal.—Nta Not.

coaka go to.

mpau hunt (the).

la with, by.

wango suggestion, proposal

oka of.

webi friend (equal).

Equiv.—Independence.

“Ta mpo ta! leka mpo leke! o kela we na?”

Anal.—Ta Enter a net to be caught.

mpo not.

ta enter a net.

leka pass—escape.

mpo not.

leke pass.

o you.

kela do.

we you.

na what?

You will not jump into the net, and you will not pass or escape; then what will you do?

Equiv.—One who doesn't know his own mind. Indecision. (A. E. R.) & (W. J. S)

“To yake la mbile! to yake la lotso! nje ekek’ e ya?”

Anal.—To yake Come not.
 la by (with).
 mbile day.
 to yake come not.
 la by (with).
 lotso night
 n I.
 je=ya come.
 ekeke season, time.
 eya which, of what?

A rebuke to the churly.

“Bokakadza wa mpoinyi jeva jo kia.”

Anal —Bokakadza .. Thought, etc.
 wa of
 mpoinyi a lazy person
 jeva Sun.
 jo it.
 kia risen.

Equiv.—Prov. xxii. 13.

A vain excuse of the slothful.

“Nsusu nta ekaka betond’ efi.”

Anal.—Nsusu Fowl (cock).
 nta not.
 ekaka crows.
 betonda perches
 befi two.

Equiv.—A man is master of his own house, not of others.

A reproof.

“ Mbus’ otsa lako loela bafeka nko lolingo.”

Anal.—Mbusa Back of head.
 botsa head.
 lako no, not.
 loela a calling.
 bafeka behind.
 nko no, not.
 lolingo noise of footsteps of those who
 are following after, etc.

Equiv.—“ Out of sight, out of mind.” Absent and not missed.

“ Ngola y’afeka nt’o ’ise.”

Anal.—Ngola Camwood, with which they paint
 their bodies.
 ya of.
 bafeka behind, back.
 nta not.
 o you.
 bisa to rub.

A Simile of the secrecy of backbiters.

“ Lolango l’ona im’ ele nyango.”

Anal.—Lolango Love.
 la of.
 bona child.
 ima from.
 ele of.
 nyango mother.

Equiv.—The source of (human) love is of the mother.

“ Ise a ko langa nkiki nyango ! ”

Anal.—Ise Father.
 a he.
 ko you.
 langa loves.
 nkiki was, was=at.
 nyango mother.

The father loves the child only while the mother remains with him.

“ Bofaiya likoji eoto a l'ako.”

Anal.—Bofaiya Stranger.
 likoji contradict, argue.
 eota relative, friend.
 a he.
 le is.
 ako there.

A Simile of suspicions aroused.

“ Cu mbile o lisa lisa to fo swela yumba : o n seya elökö na ? ”

A rebuke to those who are always seeking a quarrel, and are ever causing strife, etc.

“ Bofambe nto koke fala ise kela to la.”

Anal.—Bofambe Food.
 nto not.
 koke sufficient, complete.
 fala wait.
 ise father.
 kela then.
 to we.
 la eat.

Equiv.—Hope, expectation, patience, etc.

**“Boloja bololo we l’ana ba la,
o to n ko nci meka, nci boka
a jembo.”**

Lit. : You eat manioc and say it is bitter, but why not give me some and let me try it ; if bad I can throw it upon the rubbish heap.

Equiv.—Give me a chance !

(Baenga.)

“Botema bo coa ndajiko la nsoi.”

Anal.—Botema Seat of the affections (inner man).
bo it
coa go (goeth).
ndajiko up (above).
la with.
nsoi shame.

Equiv.—To have shame.

**“Bolök’ otali ngole bomoto la
mpoke.”**

Anal.—Bolöko A chattering, jabber, idle talk.
botali long, lengthy.
ngole like.
bomoto woman.
la and.
mpoke pot.

His incessant chatter and idle talk are like a woman attending to a boiling pot.

Equiv.—The chatter and idle talk of a chatterbox is incessant.

“Ifoso y’omoto, nongola, nongola.”

Lit.—The chatter of a woman is incessant.

**“Nta kundaka ngambe l’anoju
likila limoko; nyango lö-
foso.”**

Anal.—Nta Not.
kundaka . . . bury.
ngambe elder (an).
bonoju child (boy).
likila grave-yard.
limoko one.
nyango on account of.
löfoso talk, chatter, jabber, noise, voice,
etc., etc.

A Simile of—An old man’s contempt for children. He does not wish to be buried in the same grave-yard as they.

“Ngambe jumbu jino jilongo.”

Simile of—Selfishness. To be miserly.

**“Njöko njöko e ta ka bonoju
lokasa ombele.”**

Anal.—Njöko..... } A miser, selfish person ?
njöko }
e he.
tafo not.
ka give.
bonoju boy (child).
lokala leaf.
ombele to lick.

Equiv.—Selfishness, miserly.

“Ise ya webi ngua we wo komba a komb’ on’okai.”

Anal.—Ise Father.
 ya of.
 webi friend (equal)
 ngua shield:
 we you.
 we, o you.
 komba cover, shield.
 a he.
 komba covers, shields.
 (b)ona child.
 (b)okai his.

A Simile. Equiv.—Ingratitude.

“Botai wa webi o fid ’okulu.”

Anal.—Botai net (a).
 wa of.
 webi friend (equal).
 o you.
 fidi have.
 bokulu string.

A man borrows a net, but before returning it to the owner he repairs it with his own string.

A short time after, the owner goes to the hunt with this net and catches an animal, but refuses to give any of the meat to the man who repaired it.

A Simile of—Ingratitude.

“Okami a fa bokere nk’onembe bo le bakole.”

Equiv.—Before you can act you must know how to act.

Equiv.—Dissatisfaction. Discontentment.

“O kanda wiji wa jina.”

Equiv.—Track a thief by his footprints.

**“lvaka locide nyama lofoso n kela
mö?”**

Equiv..—Inability to help.

**“Basi bokwa ekila nk’ on ’oki
webi.”**

Anal.—Basi Water.
 bokwa salt.
 ekila abstinency.
 nko only.
 bona. child.
 oki of.
 webi friend (equal).

Equiv.—Favouritism

**“Toti ta nyama tofi nso watsa
nso watsa o n dasa we la
w’atol’ imo?”**

Anal.—Toti Small particles.
 ta.. of.
 nyama meat.
 tofi two.
 nso I.
 wa die.
 tsa fire.
 o you.
 n me.
 (d)asa seek.
 we you
 la and.
 we you.
 atola cut off, divide.
 imo more.

Equiv.—An insinuation against selfishness in dividing meat.

bofumba a sop.
njela a fishing?
eka at.
nyango..... mother.

Equiv.—Confidence.

**“ Nto coa lankesa botatana lökolo
o cumola ba y’ase ! ”**

Anal.—nta Not.
o you.
coa go (goeth).
lankesa early morning.
botatana exhaustion, a feeling of weakness,
a result of hunger, etc.
lökolo evening.
o you.
cumola annoy, trouble, etc.
ba they.
yo = to
asa seek.

A rebuke to the indolent and undeserving beggars.

“Jisu nta ko enela.”

Anal.—Jisu Eye.
 nta not.
 ko you.
 enela..... manifest, reveal to.

It was done behind one's back, and therefore the eye could not reveal it to one.

“A le bosikota ng'okwa.”

Anal.—A He.
 le is.
 bosikota a young man.
 nga like.
 bokwa salt.

A Simile.—A good young man (in disposition).

“A le bosikota nga mboiyo!”

Anal.—A He.
 le is.
 bosikota a young man.
 nga like.
 mboiyo..... A straight tree.

A Simile.—A fine young fellow (physique).

“Bowa nta sambaka mbula!”

Anal.—Bowa Dry season.
 nta not.
 sambaka lacketh, in need of, etc.
 mbula rain.

The dry season is not without some rain!

There is some rain even during the dry season.

“Mpela nta sambaka biane.”

Anal. —Mpela Wet season.
 nta not.
 sambaka lacketh, in need of, etc.
 biane heat, sunshine.

The wet season is not without its sunshine.

There is some sunshine even during the wet season.

“Bamato nta sambaka löfoso.”

Women are not in need of words.

Lit. — They are fluent.

“O fonga bokumba ekaka.”

Finish the palaver, cause it to be settled. Come to a decision.

“Bots’ ak’efikere, efikere nk’otso k’ontu!”

A night alarm or ruse to arouse the inhabitants, to warn them of a burglar’s approach.

“O bok’ elunge nda ngunda lai?”

Anal. — O You.
 boka throw.
 elunge face.
 nda in (into).
 ngunda forest.
 lai why?

Equiv. — Why do you despise me? Why treat me with scorn and disdain?

Said to an acquaintance who turns his head away from you while passing.

“Namba bau ya nd’ isika, bau yo cika boje!”

Anal.—Namba Elephants.
 bau they.
 ya come.
 nda in (into).
 isika street or open space of the town
 bau they.
 yo to.
 cika leave.
 boje spring, or short wet season

A sign of spring-time coming.

“Nyama yo liela etumba yo ya.”

Anal.—Nyama Animals.
 yo they (to).
 liela come out of the forest into the town.
 etumba fight, army, etc.
 yo it (to).
 ya comes.

A sign of something grave or of a serious nature going to happen.

“Nso kola ntukunyo bosuka lilo.”

Anal.—Nso I.
 kola take.
 ntukunyo a kind of mushroom.
 bosuka one who causes to stop, or prevents, etc.
 lilo hunger (want of meat).

Not having any meat. I take the mushroom, which is serviceable for stopping the cravings of hunger.

A Simile.—If you cannot accomplish your object, do the next best thing, etc., etc.

“To ond’ ekute jina ji kela nk’asi.”

Anal.—To We.

onda	.....	track, trace, etc.
ekute	.....	footprint of yesterday?
jina	.....	footprint (fresh).
ji	.....	it.
kela	.....	do, etc., etc,
nko	.....	only.
basi	.....	water (fresh).

While they are tracing the footprints of an animal which passed yesterday, they suddenly come across footprints fresh of this day's.

Equiv.—A sudden surprise. An unexpected event.

“To ond’ esende bongolo bo liteko bwö.”

Anal.—To We.

onda	.....	track, trace, etc.
esende	.....	squirrel.
bongolo	....	porcupine (a kind of).
bo	.....	it.
le	.....	is.
iteko	.....	net.
bwö	.....	sudden (without warning).

While they were hunting for a squirrel a porcupine suddenly darted into the net.

Equiv.—An unexpected event. A surprise.

“Boseka boki bombölö la nkoi.”

Anal.—Boseka One who causes laughter.

boki	.....	which.
bombölö	....	a small animal.
la	.....	and.
nkoi	.....	leopard (a).

The fable is:—Said the “bombölö” to the “nkoi”—when you hear my cry you come; for then I shall be on the ground. Now when the “nkoi” heard the cry of the “bombölö” he went to the place from whence the cry came—but, lo! he found the “bombölö” was far away, at the top of the highest tree.

Equiv.—A hoax.

“ Bomwe isika etumba l’ekulo.”

Equiv.—Be watchful, and on your guard. Be cautious, etc.

“Lifaiya l’iko l’otomba.”

The "botomba," which is sitting just outside of its own den, keeps the "iko" back. They gossip, but in the meantime a trap is set by a hunter, and the "iko" in trying to return to its distant home is caught in the trap.

A warning to simpletons and those unsuspecting danger.
(Prov. 14, 15.)

“Ba ki 'amato bau coa baende.”

See No 3.

**“Inkuni au sana nda lisafa; a
sanela nyango l'ise.”**

Anal.—Inkuni Child, infant.
au he.
sana plays.
nda in.
lisafa a puddle.
a he.
sanela plays for or to.
nyango mother.
la and.
ise father.

If the child is allowed to play in the puddle of dirty water he will cover his parents with dirt when nursed by one of them.

A Simile of.—The child which is never corrected will bring trouble upon its parents.

**“Nganza e om'iyloambi wa'nde
yo om'iylokekele.”**

Anal.—Nganza A stick.
e it.
(b)oma kill.
iylo they.
loambi lizard (a large species).
wai [it is] equal to.
ende it, he, etc.
yo to.
(b)oma kill.
iylo they.
lokekele a small animal.

A Simile. Equiv.—Impartiality.

“Lokaya n ka nko o n ka emi!”

Cause to be giving. I give no (one) who (to) me gives me.

Lit.— I continue to give, but no one gives to me.

“Em’ on o simbe.”

I am passing, or I am going.

“Nso coa o lemba nkongia lita.”

Anal.—Nso I.
 coa go.
 o or lo to.
 lemba tie.
 ngongia ‘ .. }
 ‘lita } eyelashes.

Equiv.—I am going to bed,

“Nsau y’anoju ” { **Kwa te! kwa te!**
 to kudza baise
 bau coa ecumba
 nda likoji, bo-
 kumbi bo f’ ut’
 ola ”

Equiv.—

Lullaby { Listen! listen! We hear (caus.) fathers
 they go to (the) fight in argument (etc.)
 (the) warrior (chief) he returns not to
 town (lit he escapes not).

“Nso w’aisilo mo.”

I am sleepy!

“Lo lotso!”

Good night!



1899 Akpabio Ibibio.pdf

10-50

THE SAYINGS OF THE WISE

IBIBIO PROVERBS AND IDIOMS

(REVISED & ENLARGED)

BY

ANINETIE AKPABIO

Second Edition.

"Copy Right Reserved"

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1 The Important of Proverbs — — —	1
2 Current Ibibio Proverbs and Maxims	2—30
More Proverbs	31—35
3 PART TWO: Idiomatic Expressions —	36—43
Other Expressions	44—51

CHAPTER ONE

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROVERBS

Ibibio proverbs express truths about life and they are based on experience and wisdom. They embody advice, warning, reproach, fate and rules of conduct towards elders, strangers and relations.

Some Ibibio proverbs express philosophical thoughts. The saying ayara adia Abasi abat isua is a clear recognition of God as the Supreme Being and the controller of man's fate. The Ibibios believe that the spirit of man does not die. The saying Ekpo akpa enyin ikpaha uton is based on this fact.

People often employ proverbs to give force and dignity to their statements. They help people to convey their ideas briefly and vividly. Take for example the following proverbs: *Eyen ntiat ese ana nte eka ana*; *Idion ese ebre nto ntie*; *Ka nte abak oyibo ikpan*; *Aka iso enye omono enyin idim*; *Mmon ama ekpene ke aban ana odo mbuk*. These expressions have more force and convey our thoughts more sublimely than ordinary plain statements.

Understanding proverbs can be a guide to one's daily behaviour. A proverb could be a source of hope and encouragement to the despairing. When you are faced with a decision to make, or a problem, a moment of thought may remind you of a proverb which can lead you to the right decision.

The following chapters contain some of the current Ibibio proverbs and other idiomatic expressions. Some of them are beautiful. Some contain awkward expressions, and are difficult to interpret. Now take a proverb then think of a suitable situation in which it can be applied.

CHAPTER TWO

CURRENT IBIBIO PROVERBS AND MAXIMS

Ayara adia, Abasi abat isua

Meaning: God reckons the days of evil-doers. The word AYARA here means a strong or clever man and is used in a derogatory sense to describe a rogue or a wicked man. The philosophical implication here is the recognition of God as the supreme judge who can bring any evil doer to Justice and has control over man's destiny.

Adia nkpo ino edi ino

Meaning: He is a thief who receives stolen goods.

Asaga enyle owo enye ofon

Meaning: It is good to have friends where ever one goes.

Afo osukho, afo oduok idem mmog

Mean ng: You have no helper.

Atimme etituzk isog ana eketot Abasi

Meaning: Before we do something we should first of all inform our parents or our masters. The implication is that before ATIMME strikes the ground it must first of all go up. The going up of ATIMME is taken to mean literally informing God. Again the

philosophical implication here is the belief that God (Abasi) is the supreme being, our master.

Aṅwana aṅwan edi iba, omum osop ita

Meaning: When two persons are fighting or quarrelling a mediator is necessary to settle the matter. It is an appeal to two quarrelling persons to accept the decision of the mediator

Akpan owo utok, enye akpan mkpa

Meaning: Literally it means a person who prevents another from quarrelling has saved him from death. It emphasizes the fact that a mediator is very important in feuds or disputes.

Asabo adiaha nkpo ɔdɔŋ ke idip ibom

Meaning: My good is your good. Any privilege or benefit you receive is counted for your family too. The cobra is believed to be offspring the python and so what the python has is also for the benefit of the cobra. In African social life, everybody is his brother's keeper.

Ataha ubom ke esuk owo enyene

Meaning: Idiot owo enyene andinyene. Ataha ubom may refer to a worthless person or thing.

Ama okop tap aya ɔnuho

Meaning: You will regret for your obstinacy. This is often directed to someone who has been warned not to do a certain thing.

Abasi ekit itit emiaɲ ke enyɔɲ

Meaning: Only God can judge the situation.

Ama ɲkɔɔ ɔbɔk abak

Meaning: If you want something you must toil for it.

Anana ɲkpɔ ese obo ke eyen eka idoho esen

Meaning: It is a poor man who says his brother is not a guest. A guest is usually treated as an important person in Ibibio and is usually received with much reverence—that is—he would be given good and accommodation. A poor man is likely to neglect his brother when he visits him and may not treat him as a guest because of his poverty. That one does not treat one's brother as an important guest may be a sign of poverty.

Asaɲa isag ibukho mbuk, inɔ ibukho ntiim

Meaning: No one can recount all his troubles.

Akpan aka utɔk, Udo aka mbono

Meaning: To betray a person, to behave cowardly.

Aman ke udua ete fut ukot

Meaning: It is an open secret.

EXERCISE ONE

1 What is the meaning of the following proverbs?

(a) Adia nkpo ufok owo ada owo mbuk

(b) Ama nkoro obok abak

(c) Etok ebok okpon aka inie ikpa

(d) Akpan isinaha mbot ufok eka ke idem idin, mme ibiakka eka Akpan, abiak Akpan

2 Akpasana isan eyen idiaha se mbon ufok edia
Who is "akpasana isan" Give the full meaning of this maxim.

3 Complete the following sentences using suitable words or phrases

(a) Atimme etituak ison _____ eketot _____

(b) Akpan aka utok, Udo aka _____

(c) Aman ke udia _____ ukot _____

4 Ayara adia Abasi abat isua

What does "ayara" mean here. Construct a sentence using the above proverb to show its meaning.

Ekpo akpa enyin ikpaha uton

Meaning: Ekpo is blind but is not deaf. Here ekpo refers to a dead person. It means the spirits of our dead ones still alive and with us. If you are making a statement, to emphasize that you are speaking the truth because the dead (understands) hears you, you can use the maxim. A dead person's ears are always open while the eyes are always close

Ekpo use enyin okok afia

Meaning: When ekpo (spirit) is watching and you are still making trap. You are being foolhardy. Ekpo here refers to one's conscience. It means your conscience is blaming you.

Eto oto nnan, oto inan

Meaning: The accident claimed all lives. A falling tree is likely to hit, a blind or a deaf man. A blind man cannot see. A deaf man can't hear. They can't run away at the instance of a falling tree.

Etok inuen asat ama ete atara adan

Meaning: A small bird though pinning away, says it is enjoying good health. To have a false or exaggerated notion about one's self or importance. It is a sort of mockery. Another such saying is: Idoho mfat, ete ido mbon.

Se nte enye ɔɔɔde inua, idoho mfat ete
ido mboŋ.

Ebemiso idim ekit enyin idim

Meaning: The first person to reach the stream in the morning is the one who sees the beauty of the stream.

Eyen ete itiehe nte eyen eka

Meaning: Half brother is not like the real brother. Half brother is not as important as one's real brother. Our love for our relations is shared proportionally according to the connection. The love we have for our real brothers is stronger than that of our half brothers.

Enyene adiaha eka itie eyop, ɔkɔt ndubodo iba

Meaning: One who has a sister in "itie eyop" is sure to take two rolls while others take one each. It means one is sure to enjoy favour when one's close relation is around. In other words "Blood is thicker than water".

Edim usen keet ldukhɔ lsɔŋ

Meaning: One day's rain cannot get deep into the soil. Metaphorically the maxim means that perseverance is the key to success.

Enyene ŋkpɔ omum nnun keet

Meaning: Literally the maxim means: He who owns a thing hold it with one hand. When two people are claiming something, the one

who has less claims to it would be more arrogant and fussy whereas the other person who is the rightful owner would be more calm and confident.

Enyene ufok ama ɔwɔɔ inyɔn ɔɔɔn ubɔk ke aban

Meaning: When the head of the house is away Inyɔn goes to the waterpot to drink (inyɔn is a person afflicted with ulcers). When the master is away the servants indulge in forbidden acts. In other words, when the cat is away the mice would play.

Eto ɔɔ owo utɔn, ɔɔ ifɔk

Meaning: Literally it means: When a tree hits somebody's ears, it makes the person to gain knowledge. Experience is the best teacher.

Ebɔb ufok ekeene mboi

Meaning: We build our houses according to the type of poles we have. Cut your coat according to your size.

Example: Ku unam se udukemeke, bɔp ufok mfo keene mboi.

Ewa ese kpep ewa isɔɔ

Meaning: It is the dog that teaches another how to squat. Habits are formed largely through imitation.

Etok eyen eyem eyot Abasi ɔno nnam

Meaning: The literal translation is: If a child likes crying Abasi gives him yaws. "Nnam" is a serious form of "mfat" just as small pox is more serious than chicken pox.

The saying means that a stubborn or disobedient child who indulges in evil would be punished with greater evil. It is a sort of rebuke. Another similar saying is: Etok eyen eyem mfat Abasi ɔno nnam.

Eka keet iboko uwene

Meaning: The literal meaning is: One mother alone does not feed a poor man. Wealth is not the monopoly of one family.

Enyene ufok ese odomo mboi

Meaning: A man has right to run his own home in the way he likes. He would not tolerate any dictation from outside.

Enyene ufok akama nnana, esen akama unyɔɔ

Meaning: The host is often anxious to see that a visitor stay for a long time but the guest may be unwilling to do so. In other words the host cannot impose anything on the guest against his wish.

Ediduoɔɔ inuɔ ke nsia ebioɔ

Meaning: To salt the porcupine's intestine when it is already salty. That is to waste something or to waste one's efforts.

Edue ukot akpa ito

Meaning: It is risky not to obey the laws of the society.

Etat ekyat eka eyen, ete eyen bop enyin

Meaning: You cannot afford to remain indifferent when evil is being discussed against your relation.

Ebak oto, oto otoho

Meaning: You are being warned but you don't pay heed to the warning.

Eta eno eyen unen, eta eno ndukpo

Meaning: We should warn or blame on both sides. That is: We should not be impartial in our judgement. We should warn both parties.

Eduke eyop enyene etok isip

Meaning: That is something that will waste a lot of time.

Ekpo ufik okoko owo

Meaning: Trouble often begins at home. Jealousy often emanates from some one very close to a person.

Eyem anwan, aka Annan

Meaning: A brave man who wants to fight should go to Annang. Annangs were reputed to be fierce fighters in the pre-colonial days.

Ekiko unen imaha usoro ekpo enye okpok ide

Meaning: One should not rejoice until one has successfully overcome one's problems or danger.

Eto keet isikabake akai

Meaning: A tree cannot make a forest.

Ebot otu ata ebre otu

Meaning: It is an internal trouble, an internal affair.

Enyong osong akan ebok, odok

Meaning: To swallow more than one can chew.

Edem idoho idem

Meaning: To be ignorant of what is going on behind one's back. Being taken unawares

Eyot odok ke esa aba, aba idionke.

Meaning: We are not always aware of the evil that is planned against us.

Eke ebaqa ke esaha

Meaning It is the unlucky person that suffers. In other words he is the scape goat.

Enyin ekpere okpo iwuo

Meaning: If not for our relationship I would have treated you badly.

Ekon isimaha udim

Meaning: We shall not all perish. Literally it means war cannot annihilate a whole/column.

Ebaga idem, idem asaga ke usug

Meaning: If we are thinking about a particular person whom we have not seen or discussing something about him and suddenly the very person appears at that moment then we use the maxim. It means the very person we are discussing about may be on the way coming to us.

Etogo ke idap ekpep mkpa

Meaning: From sleep to death. He who is fond of telling lies may steal. From little things we can commit big offences.

Enag idigoke ufon isim tutu ema ekpikhe efep

Meaning: Often we neglect small things and only when we lose them do we come to realise their usefulness.

Esit mman isogke mman

Meaning: Our love for our relations is natural.

Eka ekpu anyai mmig, aka ekpu okop utebe

Meaning: He is suffering from guilty conscience

Etok ebet osop Inua Ikim enye ata itut

Meaning: Anxiety causes trouble. He who rushes on things often get into trouble

Eyen ikopke item Ino aka enye osusk idem

Meaning: A child who does not heed his or her mother's advice is lost.

Osog owo ekin ofog

Meaning: It is the old who instructs the young.

Eyop otogo ke etok edi eduek

Meaning: A good palm tree starts from tender age to show a sign of goodness. A person starts from his youth to show good character. Most of our habits are formed when we are young. We can caution someone or praise him by drawing his attention to this maxim.

Example; Kpeme idem fo eyen mmi koro eyop otogo ke etok odo eduek.

Ebit eduek eyop edug akwa

Meaning: To spend a great deal of time on one thing or on one good subject. Eduek means good palm fruits. Akwa means a wooden container. Edug akwa means literally to stay in the container. That is to spend much time while preparing (eduek eyop). In other words to spend too much time on one item.

This saying is common in a meeting where so many items are discussed. If someone fears that too much time is wasted on one item he might warn: ofon nnyin itre do mbak iku ubit eduek eyop idug akwa.

Esaga ke edem eyen etuk eka eba

Meaning: Literally it means: Having access to a woman's breasts through the baby she

is holding. One can intentionally touch a woman's breasts while playing with the child she holds. Generally it means; to have access to something through another person or to win favour indirectly.

Enyene ufak ese odomo mbol ufak esie

Meaning: You have the right to manage your affairs as you like.

Enyene esit enyene ekikere

Meaning: It is your own responsibility. Your feelings come from your heart. You have the right to decide as you like.

Ese eda ubak ukpobbo nsun, ekpobbo okwak

Meaning: Literally it means that it is the very hand that we use in catching a fly that we will use in catching a bee. In other words we should check our behaviour else we shall fall into a big trouble. A similar maxim is: Inua usak imam ke ese eda etua eyot.

Edim akpan inwan, ikpanke udua

Meaning: Rain may prevent people from working on the farm but not from going to the market. This maxim stems from the fact that markets unlike farm are usually held once a week and so people cannot afford to stay for a whole week without going to the market. Another idea is that there are shelters at the market places.

Etuene ekwan uweme

Meaning: A late comer, A late starter.

Ekut mfon emek ukut

Meaning: No one neglects a thing that he judges to be good.

Eda nkpọ akpa-ọfọ, edio akpa-ọfọ

Meaning: You are rewarded by your own effort that is — according to what you present.
Kindness begets kindness.

Ekit owo mkpa ke enyin esakka mmọ eyot

Meaning: One who is at the scene of event will understand more the situation, and will be more sympathetic.

Ku use nte uruk-ikot ọnyọọ aka ubara ika ukeene

Meaning: Do not be drastic towards someone because of his behaviour.
Do not seek revenge.

Efut ika emen nsu

Meaning: To gain from one's endeavours.

EXERCISE TWO

- 1 What is the meaning of each of the following proverbs and maxims?
 - (a) Emen etap ọdionọ nde unan ke usun itọ
 - (b) Eyen ifioke, eka itemmeke
 - (c) Eyen ekit ete isinanake mbuk
 - (d) Enyene idem ọdionọ nte mfat ideep
 - (e) Eyen itiat ese ana nte eka ana
 - (f) Eno inu, ete iyem utasi

2. Enyong osong akan ebok, odook
Who is "ebok" in this context ?

Give the full meaning of the following saying:

- (i) Eyen uwene ese oko ikot, ikoho ufok
- (ii) Ekpedi udua etibume, odoho akpan udua
- (iii) Ekenam eyen eka eno usen mbaba

3. Complete the following sentences using suitable words or phrases:

- (a) Ekpo use enyin _____afia
- (b) Ekpo akpa enyin _____uton
- (c) Edim usen kiet _____ison

4. Supply the missing words in the following sentences:

- (a) Eyot odook _____aba, _____idionoke
- (b) Ekit owo mkpa _____eyot
- (c) Eyen itiat odook _____esit
- (d) Enag ama akpa, ayak ukut _____ikpa
- (e) Eyen _____ese _____uforo usuk usuk

Idiag isiboppo enyin ino ntan

Meaning: It is the characteristic of a brave man
not to run away from difficulties

Imo edi ufen

Meaning: We have to toil if we want to be rich

Ifiok iyuhoke owo

Meaning: Our knowledge is imperfect. That means
we do not know everything

Ikpori ikemme ukoono

Meaning: One person cannot face a group

Idoho eka keet oboke inem efere

Meaning: Virtue is not practised only by a few
family.

Idat enyene ama

Meaning: Nobody is without a friend

Idat eyem efere ese eno ke eba

Meaning: Anxiety breeds difficulties

Ikpat eka unen isiwoodo ndito

Meaning: A hen's feet cannot kill the chickens
That means the mother's actions are never
meant to be harmful to the children.

Idoho usen etibbeke ube ke mfof ese oduo oduk

Meaning: It is not the very day that a pit is dug
that frog will fall into it. That means
success is not always achieved in a day.

lkaṅ aka ata iḱt, edido unen ayarake ndak ke edem

Meaning: If fire can burn tortoise how much less a fowl. That means a person who is not strong enough will not be able to face the situation.

lko etip anana owo

Meaning: A person without supporters hardly wins cases.

lkwot ese atamma nte ekpere ube

Meaning: One should approach a person in whom one has confidence. In other words we should act prudently.

lbritam ete ino owo, afo udoho owo

Meaning: Do unto others as you would like others do unto you. In the days of slave trade the Aros slave raiders were fond of saying this: Ibritam ete ino owo; i. e. Ibritam wants slaves. But people would rebut: "Afo udoho owo?"—Are you not a man? It was rebuff to the wicked demand.

lmo okongo edet ekpe, uwene okongo ndaam

Meaning: A wealthy man wears costly jewels whereas a poor man puts on raffia (a mean dress). In other words we should act according to our ability.

lfitke mfuk inannake enyin

Meaning: To receive a guest coldly by offering him neither food nor drink. Kini ntoho Dekosi

ndi, ami mma aka ufok omo edi enye
ikefitde mfuk, inannake enyin.

Ifisk otuk ikpog

Meaning: One person's knowledge is not sufficient

Inuen edo ndo ke ekpuk or ke ete, ke ete, idoho odusat

Meaning: Birds do not mate outside their families
The saying simply implies that people should
marry within their own circles.

Idop, idop ewa, enye ata okpo unam

Meaning: It is a quiet dog that eats the fatest bone

Isua itiaba idoho ekim

Meaning: Seven years is not forever

Idiog ebre nto ntie

Meaning: First come first served.

Ifonke fon obu enye onwune ekug

Meaning: Every events has a cause

Ino ese eyiye ibit okoneyo

Meaning: It is a thief who is a'ways afraid of the
night's drum.

Explanation: A drum signal is not usually given at
night unless there is an emergency, especially
in cases of burglary or theft. A thief who
has stolen something will be afraid of such
signal. He will always keep his ears open
at night for such drum signals so as to
find a way to escape

Isog ekpekpene, edi isopke sop

Meaning: Long standing debts are not irrecoverable

Idisk enyin owot ewa

Meaning: Having a bad reputation is not good.
It is unworthy to have a bad name

Iso ukaha edem utlmmেকে

Meaning: You neither go forward nor backward.
That means to be in a fix

iko etip ikpon

Meaning: One who has no support cannot win a case.

Ifiak on editibe

Meaning: Two heads are better than one

Ikwa etip mbobo etip uyai

Meaning: To miss both chances. To be completely rejected.

EXERCISE THREE

1. What is the meaning of the following maxims?

- (a) Ifiak on editibe
- (b) Ino ese eyiene ibit okoneyo
- (c) Idem on akpara uweme
- (d) Idem etok eyen ese eyere idip idip
- (e) Isidoho ekpe isimke Afaha ebak

2. Complete the following sentences using suitable words:

- (a) Idat ese _____ ama
- (b) Idia _____ enyin _____ ntan
- (c) Iko etip _____ owo

3. Ikang aka ata ikit. What is the meaning of "ikit" in this context. Write the proverb in full.

4. What is the meaning of the following words?
ukpotio iko, ufiot, nke.

Mbuk ikit, idoho efít ido akpaníkò

Meaning: There is little or no truth in the story.
The situation is doubtful.

Mbime odukpo ebót (A question of the dead goat)

Meaning: A hypocritical question An unnecessary question.



Mfón ekewót edat

Meaning: Too much kindness can ruin a man.

Mbòpiso okpobót ikpanna unyam

Meaning: Communal duty is compulsory.

Ọtànga ndia ufók eka ese oboiyo mbòhò

Meaning: Stealing often start from little dishonest practices at home.

Ọkpò ntak udua

Meaning: A profitless venture. A worthless person

Ọkpò ifónke ntim nnam

Meaning: Too much care can ruin something

nyuk inyan nime ikan

Meaning: Show your might. Do your worst.

Ọkpọ ekpenam anaan etem ke obot

Meaning: Let evil befall an obstinate person so that he may learn a lesson.

Ọkop ke ebek ifia

Meaning: The news came from outside source.

Nwan unwọn ini okutde eyo

Meaning: Make hay while the sun shines.

Ọkpọ akanam ịkot, mfon adat

Meaning There is no smoke without fire.

Ndunogo item itie efere afon ke edisinke kaga ikpan

Meaning: Forewarned is forearmed

Owo nwan afon ubok etem Eso

Meaning: A good woman does not neglect housekeeping

Nnanenyin esin idap udua

Meaning: It is hardship that brings misery and despair

Nnun ubok idihe ukem-ukem

Meaning: People are not equal

Ndion edim ekeyem uwem yak enye eke duk inyan

Meaning: If you want safety you must not isolate yourself from your society.

Ọkpọ ata okok ete Ododo

Meaning: To accuse wrongly. To blame a wrong person or thing.

Ọwakha ntọ́ọ uduọ́ isiyọ́kọ́ nto

Meaning: Something that produces little or no effect
It is a minor contribution,

Ndibọ́ ndọ́ ke atibe ekpat

Meaning: To live a wasteful life.

Ọkpọ́ Itukhọ́ asaga iba

Meaning: It is helpful to have a companion.

Ọkpọ́ mbaba isibake ndek

Meaning: If you want something eagerly you will
spare no trouble to acquire it.

Nnam nte esa, ete ke enye ekeyit atat isin

Meaning: Imitation is bad. A similar proverb is:
Ndubọ́iyọ́ ete ke enye eyire owo efik.

Ọkpọ́ akak owo ayat

Meaning: An unbearable situation.

Nte ubọ́ ama idem anim ifen

Meaning: You are free to go to where you like.

Ọkpọ́ edi enen ekim

Meaning: Peace is being threatened or danger is
approaching

Nso isine ke idip idiań ikan ekpa nsun

Meaning: It is a minor affair or a common thing

Ọkpọ ekenam obu onwune ekun

Meaning: Something must have caused the crayfish to grow a hunch on the back.

Odoro ke eyo owo, odoro ke eyo owo

Meaning: From one generation to another. That is from one era to another or from age to age. The philosophical implication here is that no era of government is permanent.

Owo isidutke editim eyen eka isin ke ọkan

Meaning: Nobody would deliberately do something to mar his brother's success.

Ofuri usen enyene Ino, edi usen kiet enyene enyene inwan

Meaning: A thief will one day meet his doom. That is one day he will be caught. Generally it means that there is a day reckoning for evil-doers

Owo isinaha ọkan kiet ide idap

Meaning: One should not depend on one means of earning a living

Owo efen ọsọsọ owo edem isimke isin

Meaning: No person is like a brother or a relative

Owo akpa akpa ọbọhọ etlbe enyin

Meaning: Nobody is free from trouble or misfortune until he is dead.

Owo ɔdlɔŋ nte amana, idilɔŋke nte akpa

Meaning : Nobody knows his or her destiny. A person can say; "This is where I was born" but he cannot say; "This is where I will die." No one can ascertain his future.

Owo islmaha mkpaŋ nyak ke idem idin

Meaning: Decent people do not like ugly thing or treatment

ɔbɔkhs mkpasi akpa ekim

Meaning : To escape from a dangerous situation but fall into another one. Not to be able to free oneself completely from trouble.

ɔfɔŋ etibe

Meaning: A desperate person

ɔbɔk unen isitaha ukplɔ

Meaning: To get no reward for your labours

ɔduɔk ntɔŋ ke ntɔŋ ekeene

Meaning: The shaft which is aimed at another turns against one who cast it.

ɔdlɔŋ ufɔn

Meaning: A useless person

ɔtsk edinyehe

Meaning: A scape goat, A mean person. A target

ɔts lkɔŋ eyem ŋkɔk

Meaning : He who marries wants a child. This means that the primary aim of marriage is to raise children.

Ọsọ́n esít ọ́tá ọ́tọ́n

Meaning: Only a brave man can endure hardship.

Ọ́tọ́n ọ́dúáń ọ́kpọ́-usun efré, andiyéń isifrékẹ

Meaning: People tend to forget their wrong actions, but those who suffer from such actions are not apt to forget them. In other words people do not easily forget their misfortunes

Ọ́wọ́rọ́ eful ete idionkẹ eke ubẹk ama

Meaning: It is a matter luck or it is matter of trial and error.

Ọ́tẹ́t ọ́wọ́ ikẹ idohó idẹk

Meaning: To lay complain against another person is no sign of cowardice. In other words to protest is no act of cowardice.

Ọ́fúm ese ekpẹp eto unẹk

Meaning: Literally it means that it is the wind that teaches the tree how to dance. It is someone's action that generates good will in another person.

Ọ́kpọ́sọ́n inemesít ese ada ntuańa edí

Meaning: Too much happiness may bring despair

Se eful akama aya ọ́wọ́d íbá

Meaning: What is hidden under the anus will be seen by the pant. In other words what a man can do another man can also do. It implies competition by two opponents.

Se iworo ke ifia unen aya eben emen

Meaning : I am ready to face the situation. The saying implies a challenge to an opponent.

Sik san, sik san, ama obo owo itie or yesa, yesa ama obo Efik isan

Meaning To much compromise is not good.

Kuse edem se iso

Meaning : Don't look back, look forward

Kudara akpa edim

Meaning: Do not rejoice at your initial success.

Ke ete, ke ete idoho odusat

Meaning: Sharing of property according to the family groupings is not an act of discrimination but for fair and orderly distribution of property. In other words, charity begins at home.

Tunjo akaba mbre udiaha ibok

Meaning: You have ill-luck or you are in a serious trouble.

Ubak ukpa odo ubak umana

Meaning: Early to bed early to rise.

Unam obokho afia ababaak enonuk eto

Meaning : The animal that escapes from a trap is always afraid of something that looks like a trap. Once bitten twice shy or a burnt child dreads fire.

Uno ekpene itiehe nte uno akai

Meaning: The closer our relationship to some one
the stronger the tie

Ukitde iwut eyen ebeek ntan

Meaning: Never prepare sand until you see the
dead of the child. In other words; Do not
count your chickens before they are hatched

Ukot asaga tep tep oyoho aban

Meaning: Little drops of water make mighty ocean

Utu ke mbok esin udi, yak edim edep

Meaning: To avoid a fight let us abandon the
business.

Utu ke unam aka ama yak ebiat ikpa

Meaning: Do not allow a hunted animal to escape
For a hunter to allow an animal to run away
without being killed is regarded as a great
loss. The saying metaphorically means that
we should try to minimize our loss.

Yem obubit ebote ini eyo mikime

Meaning: Do something at the right time.

Udia efen okposop owo ikpodoho mkpuk

Meaning: It is a great loss to lose an important
thing, or something that has been well
cared for.

Ukan ebreke eno, inekke

Meaning: He does not do what he is expected to do

Utere ndia

Meaning: A shameless person, a beggar

Utere uduok uduag

Meaning: You are desperate, you are unlucky.

Udua ofon nka idem

Meaning: Do it yourself is better. This is supposed to have been said by a male sheep (ram)

Utin ikpon ese aka ukan inyan

Meaning: It is one sided affair

Uyio esen owo enem akan ekere

Meaning: It is interesting to hear a stranger talking

Unen akama ndito isinaha ke okom ufok, ekpena ndito esomo.

Meaning: A hen with chickens, never sleeps on the roof.

EXERCISE FOUR

1. What is the meaning of the following proverbs?

a Mbuk ikit idoho efite ido akpaniko

b Ndat mmana ifioke, enye onon ifioke

c Nkpo ntom ke ikotuku omum unen

d Oworo efute ete idionoke eke ubok ama

e Utu ke mbok esin udi, yak edim edep

f Uduag oworo ke efute, ete efene

g Ekpan ikopo, ibuo etem ntan

- g Ọbọ́n ẹ̀sẹ̀ ẹ̀kpan utòk isikpanna mfaṅa
- h Nẹ̀k unẹ̀k kedibi isọ́n

2. Complete the following sentences with suitable words in the bracket

- a Owo isidutke.....eyen eka isin ke nkan
(ofon, ekepat, editim, ikon)
- b Ọsọ́n ẹ̀sit.....oton (men, duok, ata)
- c Se iwuo ke ifia.....eben imen (ebot, unen)
- d Mbuk unyọ́n mfo nkop ke ebek.....
(eto, okpoho, ifia)

3. Explain the following sayings

- (a) Mbæk nkoṭ eyop isimaha ifen
- (b) Owo ẹ̀sẹ̀ obìom etok aban akan iba
- (c) Usun inwan ama onyoon oboho, inwan ẹ̀sẹ̀ ososop.
- (d) Owo amadak inek unek edem emem
- (e) Uso isisuaha item
- (f) Se ubok obop odo eku

4. What is the meaning of the following proverbs:-

- (a) nkpo-unam emen ekim ikpon aka udua
- (b) Ndan ukot isibiatda usoro
- (c) Nnun ekeḍuk adan ke ẹ̀sẹ̀ esio efip
- (d) Nso isine ke efut etikke no ekpikke oduok
- (e) Owo isitukho aban ikwa afaṅ
- (f) Asua eka ebe, eka ebe

MORE PROVERBS

The Ibibios like to use Proverbs in their conversations. In old days a speaker who had a good command of proverb and idioms was highly respected by his fellowmen. People who want to be diplomatic often employ proverbs in their conversations.

The following are some of the Ibibio proverbs

- 1 Afo atip mfat awuo ayaya
- 2 Abiyo iso Iyak enye omono enyin idim
- 3 Anditakha Ukaan okop ke idem omo, Ukaan nko onyung okop
- 4 Eda iko inua owo ebiere ikpe eno owo
- 5 Eyem akwa nkpo ese okono mban ayara enan
- 6 Ebot onon edon
- 7 Ese owo inua enye odiono se owo atan
- 8 Ekpa Ekpe
- 9 Ka nte abak nyoho ikpan
- 10 Ndikke Uboikpa isidoho isua keet
- 11 Owo isidionoke ikpat ubon
- 12 Anwan minyeneke se otot ebe, ete ke mmom ifaha ke edet
- 13 Ebet owo ikot isimame nto
- 14 Udono iwuchio itie mmim
- 15 Abia idionoke se abia akama (A challenger may not know the strength of his opponent)
- 16 Ukat ekpedia se adia, ifreke unyon; (A captive never forgets his home no matter how well he is treated by his captors)
- 17 Onyon onon akan ebak adok: (To over reach oneself)

- 18 Eto inwan isikpaha ima (A race cannot perish completely)
- 19 Inua usak imam enye ke ese edad etua eyet (The mouth with which we laugh, is the same with which we shall cry)
- 20 Ndunogo item itie efere ofon ke emisinne ikpan (It is better to give advice before something starts)
- 21 Ekpeduok ntak, ntak oho (If the cause or origin of an event is omitted then the event is not well explained)
- 22 Ison isiwofo nya uno
- 23 Esen owo isidiogoke usun otode eko owuo enen
- 24 Owo isibake nka ese ebak ison
- 25 Ifonno editop itiat nsin ke itie emi adan anaha
- 26 Oduk idak ebok enye atakha ebok idip
- 27 Owo isikpikheke mkpat ntak idem iduok
- 28 Etoro ndip ukot ekan ifakho
- 29 Osop ubok enye adianna ekwon enyong
- 30 Omum idem udoro
- 31 Ewa otoiyo se akadia okoro inua
- 32 Unam ekpefo Akpan no Udo atakha, osuk aka eso keet
- 33 Ekpado aban ekebot idem akpa osio inua ono nte enye ama
- 34 Ino asasa ekebo ke ikpisanu iba imo ikpiyiye ino
- 35 Akama isip keet idoho unyim
- 36 Owo ekpefut ikan emen nsun

- 37 Idiok inua iko ekesio Akpan-ndo eka ke ekon
- 38 Afo okpon afan awakha nsai
- 39 Unie owo enye ode mfon emana
- 40 Ekpodo eka omum eyen uman ana eyie ubok
- 41 Udogo ama ebidat owo idem ana edip abia
- 42 Ndiaha eben owo nkot isu
- 43 Enyia okon emomomono nkana
- 44 Ewok ewok ekufre enim
- 45 Eka iyak abaak enyin owo akpa mbok
- 46 Idadat eyom ebekhe oduk otu mfon
- 47 Okube adat akam obokho afia
- 48 Anie idun ese etim ndem idun omo
- 49 Iko Nnuene-akwa ison ison okop enyon ikoppo
- 50 Nse mfa ison ikan ebeet
- 51 Ufa iyioro ese ekedodo akaan
- 52 Owo akpa daga idem enyenge
- 53 Ataha ataha, Ekoon ke odo
- 54 Etok enyin eno idiok owo item, anam ukere
- 55 Edl kise ikot owo isikamake mmən
- 56 Nsesin ikwa, mbakabak
- 57 Owo odiongo ifiok idiongoke nnyaan
- 58 Nkpa ikwat isitippe mfat
- 59 Akpan ukut ekebo ke ise nkem enyon
- 60 Kpa anam utcho okpok ukpikke isim

- 61 Owo isikamake nkpo ubok iba idook ebeet
- 62 Umiana inua, oyoro imen oyoro ikokko
- 63 Ntuen ibok isinanake ke itie ukok ibok
- 64 "Etem utemme" aya ekit "etie udakha"
- 65 Utere odo ododiono eyeyen enye okon edet
- 66 Mbobo ekpekam una, nso ido ubok adan
- 67 Owo isitiehe enyin afia ibak unam
- 68 Ewa ata uduok unam isitimmeke ikot
- 69 Utu ke anwan abia ibok aman iba idip anabunjo
- 70 Mfine mmi ese oduo ebeek
- 71 Ubok obop edip, obop kpa edip.
- 72 Eyen ekpemum eka uman ese eyie ubok
- 73 Obon ebet nsue, ibetde eniin
- 74 Nkakat adat ntan ekpep isan enyon
- 75 Yak usun esine ke udun ebet esen
- 76 Anwan ikwereke ke mben nto
- 77 Ekit owo ke ikot idionoke ke oto ufok
- 78 Nnun ubok keet isioho ndan ke iwut
- 79 Aka itie eyop aka edonjo
- 80 Eben nkanya nka efe obo man owo ikene ekim
- 81 Owo isitohoke ikot ke uka, ese etoho ke unyonjo
- 82 Ebot ata udia enye ke iwa anaam emi
- 83 Owo mmikpaha nkot itreke
- 84 Ekpesat ndisun eyop, nso ikpiwuo adan

- 85 Ikpaṅ ibiotke, ekim adia
- 86 Owo utimme ke edem, ete esuk ukene
- 87 Ikaṅ uta inua adia ofo
- 88 Umunamma etok unen ṅkpó. ana adappa akpukpa ke ikaṅ
- 89 Udia odo ododiongo akpap odok
- 90 Ebok ama efít idip iyakka emo emo efít
- 91 Ikpaṅ awakha inua ama oṅo ṅkoro
- 92 Akama eyop keet idoho unyim
- 93 Ese odo etetim uyara ke edoṅ eben eka iwut
- 94 Umumke mum inuen ke ubok, okoot ekpa
- 95 Anwan akama ison, ese atan uyo ebe
- 96 Idoho efít imam ke ese enyiin edet
- 97 Owo ama ebidia ṅkpó inyim eyen uwene, ete abaat ubok
- 98 Idoho efít ekpo ese eduok ibit
- 99 Akpa uka idim, akpa ubom aban
- 100 Ṽkpó owo isibiarake ikpaṅ
- 101 Adiana iba isip edoṅ ufok keet, edo keet ikitdde keet iso
- 102 Ofon owo edifiongo ndek akan edifiongo umiana
- 103 Iwut ebot isisoppo ke eso
- 104 Owo ekpedia se dia ubok idungo inua
- 105 Eso ekebo ke ikpa buut ikot ete
- 106 Owo isiforoke idem ikpo
- 107 Se ubok obop odo eku
- 108 Isidoho enyie ufok idiaha ṅkpó efere akuene ke iso
- 109 Aban ikpaha, ikim iwakhake inua
- 110 Mmamana ndikit ebot iaukho

1904 Kidd Xhosa.pdf

THE
ESSENTIAL KAFIR

BY
DUDLEY KIDD

WITH ONE HUNDRED FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR



LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

1904

The Essential Kafir

SENTENTIOUS WISDOM

To understand the wisdom of a people, it is necessary to glance at their proverbs. Let me, therefore, give some native sayings which will illustrate this aspect of Kafir character. The proverbs are collected from many sources, the most valuable being taken from the pamphlet referred to in the Bibliography and from Casalis' *Les Bassoutos*. Some of the proverbs sprinkled through the pages of this book are gathered here so as to show their cumulative force.

"The last partridge to rise gets the most sticks thrown at it": that it is to say, the last man to run in war is most likely to be killed.

"A stick has no kraal": said of an irritable man who cannot obtain wives.

"The weasel has pride, the snake having gone out of its hole": When the cat's away the mice will play.

"The buck has got out of the pot": There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.

"He milks the cow in calf": He tells a lie.

"You are big in the mouth": You boast.

"Pots are made while the clay is in good condition": Make hay while the sun shines.

"The cow licks the one that licks her": Kindness brings its own reward.

"A chip killed an elephant": Get out of harm's way.

"The potter eats out of a broken dish": The shoemaker's children go worst shod.

"You have held a buffalo by the horn for me": You have rendered great help.

"You begin with the meal before the water is boiled": Do not count your chickens before they are hatched.

Mental Characteristics

“I am a lopped tree”: said in times of great disaster.

“The old corn is sprouting again”: said when a ruined man gets a fresh start.

“Let the bottle of the ear be filled”: Tell all; make full confession.

“Old mills are thrown away for new ones” (at the death of a chief the people destroy old grinding-stones): A new broom sweeps clean.

“He gathers firewood with centipedes in it”: a threat to a meddlesome man.

“The cow eats its milker”: Be sure your sin will find you out.

“A repetition will be by accident”: Once bitten twice shy.

“I returned with only a feather”: There’s many a slip ’twixt the cup and the lip.

“It is better to turn the enemy back on the hill than to drive it out of the village”: Prevention is better than cure.

“We are wandering in the belly of a bullock”: Groping in the dark.

“A dog of the wind”: a person with no settled home.

“It is the foot of a baboon”: the sign of a treacherous person.

“You are creeping on your knees to the fireplace”: said of a dangerous course of action.

“He weeps with one eye”: He is insincere.

“I am with a head”: I have a headache.

“You kindle a fire and leave it”: You are a tale-bearer.

“The walls have come into collision”: There is a dispute between great people.

“The heads being cut off, let us leave the rest”: The main points being settled, let us proceed.

“One does not become great by claiming greatness.”

The Essential Kafir

"You are lighting a fire in the wind": said of a person who favours strangers rather than his own people.

"The obstinate man will see by the bloodstain."

"No clever man ever licked his own back": Do not try impossibilities.

"Clever men do not bargain with one another."

"The hut of a man who professes, but does not perform, leaks."

"He has a cockroach in his ear": He is always in trouble.

"The eye crosses a full river": Desire goes beyond the possible.

"We shall ask for it when it is cooked": Events will prove.

"Height is not reached in a hurry."

"There is no beast that does not roar in its own den."

"The adhesive grass will cling to you": said of bad habits.

"The well ahead is not to be depended on."

"The lion which kills is not the one that roars."

"He is a calf of the old cow": A chip of the old block.

"There is blood in the dregs of the cup": Too much beer drinking leads to quarrels.

"The point of the needle goes through first": Attend to accuracy in small details, and do not try to evade the point by evasive words.

"All countries are frontiers": Wherever you are you are exposed to danger; said to grumblers.

"Water is never tired of running": said to a person who talks too much.

"To-morrow will become the day after to-morrow": said to procrastinators.

"The knife and the meat will never be friends": a warning against adultery.

Mental Characteristics

“Hunger is hidden under the sacks of corn”: said to people who are vain about their wealth.

“Lions scold in eating”: Grumblers are never happy.

“Harness is never tired”: Travel has no ending.

“A thief catches himself”: Murder will out.

“Stolen goods do not increase.”

“Human blood is weighty.”

“If a man has been killed secretly the grass of the field will say so.”

“Anger is a warmth which lights itself.”

“Right has no age.”

“Quails nest in the garden of the lazy one.”

“The lent knife never returns alone”: One kind deed brings another.

“Death does not know kings.”

“The most abundant sources can be slow in coming.”

“Scarcity lives in the house of the quarreller.”

“Two dogs will not let a fox escape”: Unity is strength.

“Two mouths correct each other.”

“The thief eats thunder”—attracts the lightning.

“The miser is a thief.”

“A good name makes a person sleep well.”

“The road is king”: Do not hinder a traveller.

These proverbs show how sententious is the wisdom of the natives, and how very shrewd their thoughts are. The very maxims which are current in Europe are to be found among the Kafirs, though dressed up in different clothing. The Kafirs naturally express their thought in terms which are familiar to them; yet they do this with admirable brevity and force.

1905 Hollis Maasai.pdf

THE MASAI

THEIR LANGUAGE AND FOLKLORE

BY
Alfred
A. C. HOLLIS

WITH INTRODUCTION BY
SIR CHARLES ELIOT

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1905

288660
13. 6. 33

PART III

'N-DEPEN OO-'L-MAASAE

No. 1.	Ainyô-pe What-and (<i>or</i> Why)	ingarsiso you-are-rich	anaa like
	en-naiyamishe the-who-has-married (intr.)	ol-tito ? the-son ?	

Why do you behave like a woman whose son has just married?

[A newly married man usually lives in his father's kraal for some months after his marriage, and a woman whose son has recently married may sit down and rest, as her daughter-in-law will do all the work.]

No. 2. Eata en-nēor.
He-has the-which-divides.

There is a Judge for him, and He will avenge me.

[A favourite saying when a person has been defeated in a fight.]

No. 3.	Eata	'l-ojoŋga	'n-giyaa.
	They-have	the-flies	the-ears.

Flies have ears.

Also: Eata en-gewárie 'n-giyaa.
 It-has the-night the-ears.

The night has ears.

[' Walls have ears.']

No. 4.	Ebaiki It-reaches (<i>or</i> Perhaps)	en-gutuk the-mouth	nainosa which-ate	'sunya the-fats
neinos and-it-eats	i-ñgik, the-excrements,	nebaiki and-it-reaches (<i>or</i> and-perhaps)		
en-nainosa the-which-ate	'ñgik the-excrements	neinos and-it-eats	i-sunya. the-fats.	

The mouth which ate fat shall eat excrement, and that which ate excrement shall eat fat.

Also:	Ebaiki	ol-ōtaara	'n-gituŋgat	neaku
	It reaches }	the-who-killed	the-cutters }	and-he-becomes
	(or Perhaps) }		(or attackers }	
			or enemies) }	

o-suuji,	nebaiki	ol-turwai
the-coward,	and-it-reaches (<i>or</i> and-perhaps)	the-poltroon
neaku	ol-oiñgōni.	
and-he-becomes	the-bull (<i>or</i> brave-man).	

The slayer of the enemy has become a coward, and the poltroon has become a brave man.

[‘The last shall be first, and the first last.’—Matt. xx. 16.]

No. 5.	Eitu-kidōl	ti-oreren	en-gerr	sambu.
	We-have-not-seen	amongst-peoples	the-sheep	many-coloured.

There is not such a thing in the world as a sheep of many colours.

[A sheep of two or even three colours is common enough, but one of more than three colours is unknown. This saying is used to express incredulity at an improbable story.]

No. 6.	Ekwenikye	’n-guk	in-guruon.
	They-laugh-at	the-coals (<i>or</i> soot <i>or</i> charcoal)	the ashes.

Coal laughs at ashes, not knowing that the same fate which has befallen them will befall it.

Also:	Ekwenikye	ol-chata	ōtii
	It-laughs-at	the-firewood (<i>or</i> tree)	which-is-there
ol-tiren	ol-ōtii	en-gima.	
the-fireplace	the-which-is-there	the-fire.	

The firewood which has been cut ready for burning laughs at that which is being consumed.

No. 7.	Eñgárie	o-sighiria	en-daa.
	He-eats-with	the-ass	the-food.

• He eats his food like a donkey.

[This is said of a man who has not had the two middle incisors of the lower jaw extracted, and whose mouth in consequence is supposed to resemble a donkey’s.]

No. 8.	Enyanyuk	ol-oipotōki	o	ol-ōēuo
	They-resemble	the-who-was-called	and	the-who-came

openy.
alone (*or* himself).

It is the same thing when a man is once there whether he has been called or whether he has come of his own free will.

No. 9.	Epwo	ēorioro	anaa	’ng-ajjik
	They-go	they-separate-themselves	like	the-huts

oo-’l-oitigōshi.
of-the-zebra.

[Zebra of course have no huts. This saying is intended to imply, ‘They are scattered over the face of the earth.’]

- No. 10.** Epwo 'm-baa pôkin in-gitiñgot.
They-go-to the-actions all the-ends.

Everything has an end.

- No. 11.** Epwōnu 'l-limot anaa 'ng-oloñgi.
They-come the-events like the-days.

Events follow one another like days.

- No. 12.** Epwōnu 'm-baa too-'murōshin.
They-come the-actions (*or* the-arrows) by-the-hind-legs.

This has a double meaning. Actions come by the use of the legs, and if arrows come, there are legs behind them.

[Long marches are inevitable before a raid can be successfully accomplished; and arrows are not fired without a person being there to fire them.]

- No. 13.** Erishunye anaa en-gāa
He-separates-himself like the-sickness (*or* death)
o-'sighiria ōbo.
of-the-donkey one.

He separates himself from his friends like a sick (*or* dead) donkey.

[A sick donkey stands apart from his fellow animals, and a dead donkey is thrown away. This saying is used when referring to a man who stands aloof from his companions.]

- No. 14.** Erisyo laikin o kaa.
They-are-similar defeats and death.

Being defeated and dying are the same.

- No. 15.** Erisyore en-giteñg nabo el-lughunya o-'l-lee.
It-resembles the-cow one the-head of-the-man.

A cow is as good as a man.

[If a man has a cow, and looks after it, he obtains riches, for the cow bears, and with the calves he is able to purchase a wife.]

- No. 16.** E'sudoī 'nyalat.
Hide-ye the-mouthfuls-of-food.

[One should not disclose one's secret thoughts any more than one shows the food one is eating.]

- No. 17.** Etaa em-bito o-'l-ñgojine.
He-has-become the-sinew of-the-hyena.

He is like a hyena's sinew.

[A man who refuses to admit himself beaten is likened to a hyena's sinew, which is said to be tougher than that of any other animal.]

- No. 18.** Etəjo en-giteñg: 'Mikindaya, injooyōki.'
It-said the-cow: 'Do-not-lend-me, give-me-away.'

[It is notorious that animals which have been lent or pawned are not as well treated as those of the person they have been lent to. Hence the cow's request.]

- No. 19.** Etəjo en-giteñg: 'Tipikaki o-rorei
It-said the-cow: 'Pour-into-me the-word
ōbana 'l-papit lo-'esen.'
which-gets-itself the-hairs of-the-body.'

The cow said: 'Say as many words about me as I have hairs in my body.'

[If you wish to sell me, strike a hard bargain, for a man who has paid a long price for me will treat me well.]

- No. 20.** Etəjo ol-ñgojine: 'Mme ake amunyak,
It-said the-hyena: 'No only I-have-luck,
keju nemaagol.'
leg which-is-not-heavy-to-me.'

The hyena said: 'It is not only that I have luck, but my leg is strong.'

[I have luck, it is true, but I have had to work. 'God helps those who help themselves.']

- No. 21.** Etii ol-dia e-mala, meishoru
It-is-there the-dog the-gourd, they-allow-not
'n-giyaa epughuri.
the-ears it-is-covered.

There is a dog in the gourd, and his ears prevent it from being closed.

[In the event of a man going to visit his friend's wife, he would first of all ascertain whether the owner of the hut were at home. Should he see unmistakable signs of the husband's presence, he would move off consoling himself by quoting this proverb.]

- No. 22.** Il-doinyo lemetumo.
The-mountains which-do-not-get-together.

Mountains do not meet.

[A favourite saying when people part company, and equivalent to, 'We shall meet again.' Cf. the Turkish proverb: 'Mountain does not meet mountain, but man meets man.']

- No. 23.** Inotye nanotye Ol-le-'n-gipika
 You-have-got which-he-got The-of-En-gipika
 te-'miñgani.
 in-the-deserted-kraal.

You have got what the son of En-gipika got in the deserted kraal, i. e. you are in a fix.

[The story told of the son of En-gipika is as follows. One day he was eating meat in the slaughter-house when the place was suddenly attacked by the enemy. He managed to escape with his life and meat, but without his weapons, and he fled, hotly pursued by the enemy. He outstripped them, however, and after running some distance, entered a deserted kraal where he proposed to hide. But he soon discovered that he was not the only occupant, and a lion growled savagely at being disturbed. Thinking it more prudent under the circumstances to leave the deserted kraal, the son of En-gipika turned round to continue his flight, when he was horrified to see an enormous serpent coiled round the post of the gate, which was the only exit, darting out its head and tongue in his direction. In the distance too he could see the enemy rapidly approaching his hiding-place. It is not related how the son of En-gipika escaped from the dilemma in which he found himself.]

- No. 24.** Ira ñigen anaa Konyek.
 You-are clever (*or sharp*) like Konyek.

You are as clever as Konyek.

[Konyek's biography was briefly sketched in the story entitled 'L-omon le-Konyek oo Menye-Konyek. The Masai are fond of referring to him whenever anything 'slim' or of a cunning or clever nature has been performed. The constructor of the Uganda Railway, for instance, has been referred to as being on a par with him.]

- No. 25.** Ira ñigidut anaa ol-dia le-'manyata oo-'l-muran.
 You-are proud like the-dog of-the-kraal of-the-warriors.

[The dogs that live in the warriors' kraals have a much happier existence than those that act as scavengers in the other kraals. Owing to the warriors' food consisting entirely of meat and milk, many bones and scraps are thrown to the dogs.]

- No. 26.** Itadua, irughōgho, etii ol-lee, netii
 You saw, you-pass, it-is-there the-man, and-it-is-there
 e-yä, netii e-ñgorōyōni, netii e-ñgooyōni.
 the-male, and-it-is-there the-woman, and-it-is-there the-female.

Behold the people you are passing. The man is there, and the male, the woman and the female.

[All people are not alike, and if you watch you find that some of the passers-by are good and others bad.]

No. 27. Itiṅgide anaa en-gāa naiya
 You-have-given-yourself-airs like the-illness which-takes
ol-murani ti-aṅg.
the-warrior in-kraal (of the married people).

[A warrior is supposed to be always in a perfect state of health, and if he is taken ill, he will hide himself in the woods or in a hut apart from the others. A disease which succeeds in overtaking him when on a visit to the married people¹, and making him the laughing-stock of all, may well be proud of itself!]

No. 28. I'yopo en-gine eng-oṅgu.
 Cover the-goat the-eye.

[When a goat is about to be strangled, it is thrown on its side, and the eye which is uppermost is covered with its ear, so that it shall not see what is happening. Similarly, if a raid is meditated on, secrecy must be observed beforehand.]

No. 29. Kindér ol-le-'modai, pe kindōkí
 We-begin the-of-the-foolishness, and we-do-again
ol-le-'ṅgēno.
the-of-the-wisdom.

We begin by being foolish and we become wise by experience.

['Experientia docet.']

No. 30. Kitāgha neme te-'ng-orioṅg.
 You-have-pressed-on-me which-is-not on-the-back.

You are not like a child who when carried only presses on my back, you press on every part of my body.

[This saying is equivalent to, 'I am weary of your company.']

No. 31. Meata ol-ataduakine nemeata
 He-has-not the-visibility who-has-not
oidipa, ōtua ake ōtaduakine
who-has-become-finished, who-died only to-whom-he-was-visible.

[Do not believe in the report of a person's death until it is well founded. Unless an eye-witness tells you the news, receive it with caution.]

¹ The warriors live in kraals apart from the married people (*vide* p. 292).

- No. 32.** Medany ol-kimōjino ōbo el-lashei.
It-breaks-not the-finger one the-louse.

One finger will not kill a louse.

[The necessity for joint action. The Swahili have a similar proverb: 'Kidole kimoja hakivundi t'awa.']

- No. 33.** Medol ol-tuñgani ol-oikulu einosita.
He-sees-not the-man the-breast-of-a-dead-ox } he-is-eating-it.
(or happiness)

A man does not know when he is well off; it is only when he is poor that he remembers the days of plenty.

[' O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint.'—Vergil, *G.* ii. 458.]

- No. 34.** Meipur ol-oĩḡōni too-'múruan¹ are.
It-bellows-not the-bull in-the-deserted-kraals two.

A bull cannot bellow in two places at once.

- No. 35.** Meishaa 'mulugi² en-dap.
It-enters-not the-bargain the-palm-of-the-hand.

A bargain cannot be held in the palm of the hand.

- Also :** Meishaa el-lejare en-dap.
It-enters-not the-lie the-palm-of-the-hand.

A lie cannot fill the palm.

[One hollow cannot fill another.]

- No. 36.** Meisho 'l-limot, in-gulye ebaya.
They-give-not the-news (pl.), the-others they-arrive-thither.

When an event occurs, only a part of the truth is sent abroad, the rest is kept back.

- No. 37.** Meitayu ol-arabal e-nyawa.
It-will-not-put-out the-quarrel the-udder-of-a-cow.

It does not take as long to settle a quarrel as it takes a cow's udder to fill with milk after she has been covered.

[The combatants either fight until one is beaten, or the matter is settled amicably at once.]

- No. 38.** Meitululuḡgayu eng-oĩḡōno.
It-will-not-make-itself-complete the-bravery.

Bravery is not everything, and however brave a man may be, two brave men are better.

[' Dieu est toujours pour les gros bataillons.'—Voltaire.]

¹ E-múrua is really the spot on which a kraal formerly stood, or the site of a deserted kraal, e-miḡani is the deserted kraal itself.

² The plural of e-mulug, the hollowed out place, is often used in this sense

- No. 39.** Meiturujunōyu eng-oshoghe metii en-gerai.
It-will-not-swell-itself the-belly it-is-not-there the-child.

The belly does not swell if a woman is not pregnant.

['There is no smoke without a fire.']

- No. 40.** Meituruk en-gume.
It-precedes-not the-nose.

The nose does not precede the rest of the body.

[This expression is often used after a misfortune has befallen one, the idea being that if it were possible to send on one's nose ahead, one could have foreseen the danger that was being threatened and made preparations accordingly.]

- No. 41.** Meiyopoo ol-ōwaru ol-kujita.
It-covers-not-away the-beast-of-prey the-grass.

[A beast of prey (or a thief) can hide for a while, but in course of time it will be captured or killed. 'Murder will out.']

- No. 42.** Melañg in-gīshu ol-ōgol le-kishōmi.
They-cross-not the-cattle the-who-is-strong of-clan (or gate).

No matter how young or weak a child may be on his father's death, he is strong in his own kraal, for his friends will see that he inherits the cattle.

[There is some play on the word *kishōmi*. The cattle will not pass the *gate* because the child's *clan* is strong.]

- No. 43.** Melañg ol-ambu en-noñgoto.
He-passes-not the-boaster the-valley.

The boaster will not cross the valley.

['Pride goes before a fall.']

- No. 44.** Melo en-geju nabo 'murano.
It-goes-not the-leg one the-meetings-of-the-warriors.

Warriors and cripples remain apart.

['Birds of a feather flock together.']

- No. 45.** Meñgasunōyu ol-kesen
It-will-not-begin-itself the-cloth-for-carrying-a-child-in
etiōyo en-gerai.
it-is-not-yet-come the-child.

Don't make a cloth for carrying a child in before the child is born.

['Don't count your chicks before they are hatched.' *Vide* also the Swahili proverb: 'Kutinda k'anzu mwana hajavyawa' (to cut out the tunic before the child is born).]

- No. 46.** Menyanyuk ateleja o atishiraka
 They-resemble-not to-cheat and to-do-by-force.

Cheating and doing something by force are not the same.

[If a man has suffered wrong, he had better try and come to an arrangement with his aggressor instead of going to complain to the chiefs, for his enemy will not forget, and will avenge himself later.]

- No. 47.** Menyanyuk puan o kää.
 They-resemble-not life and death.

Life and death are not alike.

- No. 48.** Mëoki o-inoti 'n-gipa
 It-is-not-drunk the-foster-son (or the slave) the-vernix-caseosa
 ol-ōtisinyunye ake.
 the-who-was-without-blemish only.

What does it matter whether a person is one's own child or somebody else's as long as he does his duty?

[The Swahili have a somewhat similar proverb: 'Kheri Kafari akufaaye kuliko Islam asiyekufaa' (it is better to have a Kaffir who pleases you than a Mahommedan who displeases you).]

- No. 49.** Mëoro 'l-tuli o en-gop.
 They-separate-not the-buttocks and the-ground.

The buttocks and the ground do not remain long apart.

[One explanation of this proverb is that a man must sit down, and though he may walk about or lie down, he will sit on the ground again later. Another theory is that it has in some way reference to the disposal of the dead. With the exception, however, of the medicine-men and rich people, who are buried in shallow trenches, burial is unknown amongst the Masai. But it is perhaps a remarkable coincidence that the Tavetans¹, who are closely allied to the Masai, and the Bari, Dinka, and Madi², who live nearly 1,000 miles away, and not very far from the country whence the ancestors of the Masai are believed to have hailed, bury their dead in a *sitting* posture.]

¹ Ante p. 221, note 2.

² Brun-Rollet (*Le Nil Blanc*, p. 244), Kaufmann (*Schilderungen aus Central-Afrika*, p. 129), Casati (*Ten Years in Equatoria*, p. 208), Emin Pasha (*In Central Africa*, pp. 260, 338, &c.).

- No. 50.** Mepal ol-oitigo 'sirat.
 He-does-not-leave the-zebra the-stripes.

The zebra cannot do away with his stripes.

[‘Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?’—
 Jer. xiii. 23.]

- No. 51.** Mepwo 'l-ōtimi te-'n-gop enye.
 They-go-not the-baboons from-the-country their.

Baboons do not go far from the place of their birth.

[Similarly with people, they may pay a visit to another country (and incidentally lift their neighbour's cattle), but they will afterwards return home. ‘Caelum non animus mutant qui trans mare currunt.’—Hor. *Epp.*, I. xi. 27.]

- No. 52.** Merep eng-abōboki o-'l-chani likae-shani.
 It-sticks-not the-bark of-the-tree other-tree.

The bark of one tree will not adhere to another tree.

[People of one tribe cannot assimilate the customs of another.]

- No. 53.** Merisyo e-raposhi o e-seriani.
 It-is-not-similar the-having-enough-to-eat and the-safety.

Having enough to eat and being in safety are two very different things, especially after a raid.

- No. 54.** Merisyo 'nyuat oo 'n-gidimat,
 They-are-not-similar the-perseverings and the-beings-able,
 nyuat in-gumok.
 perseverings the-many.

A double entendre.

Persevering to accomplish an end, and being able to do a thing are not the same: it is greater to persevere.

[‘’Tis not in mortals to command success,
 But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it.’—
 Addison, *Cato*, i. 2.]

And: Persevering to accomplish an end, and being able to do a thing are not the same: many persevere.

[‘Many are called, but few chosen.’—Matt. xxii. 14.]

- No. 55.** Metii oidipa, ol-doinyo ake
 He-is-not-there who-has-finished, the-mountain only
 oidipa ōtunōkīne e-wēji
 which-has-finished which-has-planted (or erected)-itself the-place
 nemedotunye
 where-it-is-not-taken-out.

Nobody can say he is settled anywhere for ever: it is only the mountains which do not move from their places.

- No. 56.** Metumo ol-lēlēo le-'mala o
They-get-not-together the-potsherd of-the-gourd and
ol-le-'mōti.
the-of-the-cooking-pot.

Broken pieces of a gourd cannot be fastened on to a cooking-pot.
[Similarly, people of different tastes disagree.]

- No. 57.** Miara en-nidamu.
You-become-not-beaten the-which (or when)-you-consider.
You will not be beaten when you think before acting.
['Look before you leap.']

- No. 58.** Miingar ol-paashe le-lighae, nīpal
Do-not-repair the-hole-in-the-fence of-other, and-you-leave
ol-lino.
yours.

Do not repair another man's fence until you have seen to your own.
['Charity begins at home.']

- No. 59.** Milo aŋgata miata ol-le-'swama.
Do-not-go plain you-have-not the-of-the-dust-in-the-eye.
Don't go to the plain without somebody to take the dust out of
your eye.
[The necessity of joint action.]

- No. 60.** Mindadol ol-kilil eng-āuo, meipiri.
Show-not the-hawk the-bow, that-he-flies-not-away.
Do not show the hawk your bow, or he will fly away.
['Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.—
Prov. i. 17.]

- No. 61.** Mindyamityam amu mējo en-gityamityam
Do-not-jump-about for it-says-not the-jumping-about
tōki.
thing.

Do not jump about, for there is no use in jumping about.
['More haste less speed.']

- No. 62.** Mira shata ōmut en-gima.
You-are-not wood which-finishes the-fire.

You are not like firewood which is burnt, you are always there.
[Said of a person whose presence has become a nuisance.]

No. 63. Mi'ro 'rorei oobana 'l-kujit.
Do-not-talk the-words which-get-themselves the-grasses.

Or : Mi'ro 'rorei anaa 'l-kujit.
Do-not-talk the-words like the-grasses.

Do not talk a great deal.

[' In the multitude of words there lacketh not sin.'—Prov. x. 19.]

No. 64. Miroro e-ñgape anaa ol-móruo
Do-not-tread-on the-post like the-old-man

ōbore ayok.
who-has-many boys.

Don't tread on the post, i.e. don't be proud, like the father of many sons.

[A man with a large family may lie on his back all day long with his feet up against a post, and trouble about nothing. His wife and daughters see to the food and milk the cows, whilst his sons guard the cattle and sheep.]

No. 65. Misiōyo amu inauru.
Do-not-hasten-thither for you-tire-yourself.

[' More haste less speed.']

No. 66. Na-Aī ! injooki ol-oip neme ol-lo-'l-chani.
O-the-God ! give-me the-shade and-not the-of-the-tree.

[Originally a prayer for a child, but now used for anything that is ardently desired.]

When the sun is hot, a mother protects her infant's head by covering it with the 'kesen,' or garment for tying the child on to her back. No woman wears this garment unless she has a baby, hence her prayer for shade.]

No. 67. Namelele neme te-'ng-oshoshe nauroo
Namelele and-not from-the-milkless whom-throws-down

e-mōtōnyi eng-aji te-'maal.
the-bird the-hut (or family) with-the-dewlap (or weight).

She is like Namelele (nickname given to a weak woman), but not because she has no milk : her child is so badly fed that it is knocked over by the weight of a bird.

[This is a term of reproach used to a woman if she does not look after and feed her children properly.]

No. 68. Naorioriki 'rēgiei.
Who-separates the-paths (or character, climate, or nature).

He who separates the paths, &c.

[A common expression for the Almighty.]

- No. 69.** Narōito ¹ e-ñgape anaa en-dingi
 Who-is-treading the-post like the-outcast
 oo-'l-oo-mbwai.
 of-the-who-have-the-teeth-extracted.

She is treading against the post like one who is not allowed in the warriors' kraals.

[Unless a girl is well dressed, according to Masai ideas, and anoints her body from time to time with oil, she is not admitted into the warriors' kraals, and becomes a social outcast. She has nothing left her to do but lie on her back and put her feet up against a post. Unlike the old man who has many sons, however (*vide* proverb No. 64), this is considered an undignified position for a maiden.]

- No. 70.** O-sina liki'ya en-neado,
 The-poorness (*or* trouble) which-takes-you where-it-is-long,
 dorop ol-oikulu.
 short the-breast-of-a-dead-ox (*or* happiness).

It is better to be poor and live long than rich and die young.

- No. 71.** Papa elde oiyēu en-giteñg oje
 Father that who-wishes the-cow which-has-just-borne
 nemetum amu sumbati 'n-gejek o-'l-ashe
 and-he-does-not-get-it because weak the-legs of-the-calf
 le-'n-dito enye.
 of-the-daughter his.

The old man cannot get milk from the cow that has recently borne, because his daughter has not looked after the calf whose legs are consequently weak.

[A saying applied by women to one of their number who is notoriously lazy.]

- No. 72.** Pashupashut anaa en-gerai natii eng-aji
 Pride like the-child who-is-there the-hut
 e-ōghoi ² enye.
 of-the-grandmother his.

He is as proud as a child living at its grandmother's.

[Grandmothers are apt to spoil their grandchildren, and a naughty boy is not so likely to be whipped at his grandmother's as at home.]

¹ Old or poetical form for en-narorita.

² E-ōghoi is here used for eng-ōgho.

- No. 73.** Sipat eñgari, meñgari 'rēgiei.
Truly they-are-shared, they-are-not-shared the-minds }
(or paths, &c.).

Men may be partners, or may eat from the same dish, but they cannot tell what is passing through each other's minds.

- No. 74.** Tadua, ebana 'sek
See, they-get-themselves the-fruit-of-the-cordia-tree
oojon.
unripe.

Look, they are as numerous as the unripe fruit of the *Cordia ovalis*.

['As the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'
—Gen. xxxii. 12.]

- No. 75.** Tigha eng-áuo, miigh eng-oñgu.
Hang-up the-bow, do-not-hang-up the-eye.

If a stranger comes to stay with you, do not forget when you lay aside his weapons that he is hungry.

['It is ill talking between a full man and a fasting.']

ILLUSTRATIVE PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

As the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude, 74.

Birds of a feather flock together, 44.

Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt, 51.

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, &c., 50.

Charity begins at home, 58.

Dieu est toujours pour les gros bataillons, 38.

Don't count your chicks before they are hatched, 45.

Experientia docet, 29.

God helps those who help themselves, 20.

In the multitude of words there lacketh not sin, 63.

It is ill talking between a full man and a fasting, 75.

Look before you leap, 57.

More haste less speed, 61, 65.

Many are called, 54.

Murder will out, 41.

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint, 33.

Pride goes before a fall, 43.

Surely in vain the net is spread, &c., 60.

The last shall be first and the first last, 4.

There is no smoke without a fire, 39.

'Tis not in mortals to command success, &c., 54.

Walls have ears, 3.

We shall meet again, 22.

'L-ŌYETYANI LOO-'L-MAASAE MASAI ENIGMAS

The propounder says, Oiyōte, Are you ready?

The others reply, E-ēuo, He has come (i.e. It is, *or* we are, ready).

No. 1.	Aata	'l-muran	lainei	kumok,	naa
<i>Enigma.</i>	I-have	the-warriors	my	many,	then
	en-geju	nabo	eitashēye.		
	the-leg	one	they-make-to-stand.		

Reply. Ol-popoñgi.
 The-euphorbia-tree.

What do my warriors resemble when they stand on one leg?

The euphorbia tree.

[Masai men often stand on one foot and rest the other against the knee¹. When in this position they are supposed to resemble the *Candelabra euphorbia*, which Sir H. Johnston² has described as being 'like a gigantic cabbage or cauliflower that has run to stalk, only to countless stalks, many-jointed, and of gouty thickness.']

No. 2.	Aata	'l-muran	lainei	kumok,	naa
<i>Enigma.</i>	I-have	the-warriors	my	many,	then
	ōbo	oipuñgōki	'n-gīshu.		
	one	who-goes-out-to	the-cattle.		

Reply. Il-loom le-'ng-aji.
 The-rafters of-the-hut.

What are my warriors like? I have many of them, and one goes out to look after the cattle. The rafters of the hut.

[In Masai huts all the rafters are hidden except one which protrudes beyond the door. It is said to be watching the cattle.]

No. 3.	Aata	'l-muran	lainei,	nemetii
<i>Enigma.</i>	I-have	the-warriors	my,	- and-it-is-not-there
	ol-le-bata.			
	the-of-end (<i>or</i> side).			

¹ This mode of resting, uncomfortable as it may appear, is widespread (*vide* Junker, *Travels in Africa during the Years 1875-8*; James, *Wild Tribes of the Soudan*; Grogan and Sharpe, *From the Cape to Cairo*; Baker, *The Albert Nyanza, &c.*).

² *The Uganda Protectorate*, p. 37.

Reply. 'N-jeito.
The-pegs.

What are my warriors like when they stand in a circle, and one cannot see which is the first and which is the last?

The pegs which are being used for pegging out a skin.

No. 4. Aata 'l-muran lanei òkuni,
Enigma. I-have the-warriors my three,
nemeduño en-gigwena metii
and-it-does-not-become-cut the-consultation he-is-not-there
ol-li-òkuni.
the-of-three (*or* third).

Reply. 'Soito le-'n-gima.
The-stones of-the-fire.

I have three warriors. What is a discussion between two of them like if the third is not present?

The stones used for standing the cooking-pots on at the fire.

[The cooking-pots cannot be successfully balanced between two stones, and a discussion does not terminate if only two people take part in it.]

No. 5. Aata 'n-dapan ainei are naarisyo.
Enigma. I-have the-skins my two which-are-alike.
Reply. Eng-ai o en-gop.
The-heaven and the-earth.

I have two skins, one to lie on and the other to cover myself with. What are they? The bare ground and the sky.

No. 6. A-isulishe, nepwōnu 'l-ooiñgua
Enigma. I-whistled, and-they-come the-who-come-from
'n-dimi.
the-forests.

Reply. Eng-ai natasha.
The-rain which-rained.

I whistle, and they all come running from the forests. What am I? The rain.

No. 7. Ana-ijo e-ēuo?
Enigma. Why he-has-come?

Reply. O-rorei lai o ol-lino.
The-word my and yours.

Why do you say you are ready to guess my riddle?

Because it is a discussion between you and me.

No. 8. Anake ěado ñgutunyi nemebaiki
Enigma. Why she-is-long your-mother and-she-reaches-not
 e-nyawa e-'n-gerr?
 the-udder of-the-sheep?

Reply. Eng-oitoi.
 The-road.

What does your mother resemble? She is long, and yet she does not reach up to a sheep's udder. The road.

No. 9. Ashōmo enda-tim, nashitu
Enigma. I-went that-wood, and-I-draw-forth (or unsheath)
 'ñgusidin are.
 the-sticks two.

Reply. Il-mao.
 The-twins.

I went to bed and brought forth two sticks. What were they?
 Twins.

No. 10. Eiduraki, neiñgwari
Enigma. It-has-been-moved, and-it-is-left-thither
 en-dap e-ñgutunyi e-igh-a.
 the-palm-of-the-hand of-your-mother it-has-been-hung-up.

Reply. Ol-arau
 The-piece-of-hide-used-for-sweeping.

We have moved our kraal and your mother has left behind her the palm of her hand which has been hung up in the hut. What is it?
 The broom.

[The piece of hide which is used for sweeping away the dust and dirt is of so little value that when the inhabitants quit their kraal and move to a new grazing ground it is probably left suspended from the wall of the hut.]

No. 11. Eiduraki, neiñgwari
Enigma. It-has-been-moved, and-it-is-left-thither
 e-sumbat e-minyi te-'miñgani.
 the-dressed-skin of-your-father in-the-deserted-kraal.

Reply. Ol-chala.
 The-dunghill.

We have moved our kraal, and your father has left behind him his garment. Where has he left it? On the dunghill.

[A man would not leave his dressed skin behind him unless it were worthless, and it is obvious, therefore, that it has been thrown away.]

- No. 12.** Eim ñgutunyi polos boo
Enigma. She-passes your-mother middle outside-the-hut
 erumisho en-neba 'nji.
 it-is-protruding the-which-reaches thus.
Reply. En-geju e-'n-gerai nanapitai.
 The-leg of-the-child which-is-being-carried.

When your mother leaves her hut, what is to be seen issuing from her garments? The leg of her child.

[Masai matrons carry their babies fastened on to their backs, and a small leg is often to be seen dangling down, while the child's body is hidden from view.]

- No. 13.** Eim ñgutunyi polos boo
Enigma. She-passes your-mother middle outside-the-hut
 emorisho.
 she-uses-abusive-language.

- Reply.* E-ñgorōyōni nanyalita en-aiñgure.
 The-woman who-is-chewing the-gum.

Why does your mother use abusive language when she goes outside her hut? Because she is a woman eating gum.

[Masai women are fond of chewing a gummy substance which exudes from certain trees. This makes their teeth stick together, and their jaws crack when they attempt to speak. If a person accosts them, and hears this noise, he may think the women are reviling him.]

- No. 14.** E-sanapat
Enigma. The-strip-of-hide-used-to-cover-the-heads-of-arrows
 nashal kutuk.
 which-is-wet point (or mouth or end).

- Reply.* Eng-oitoi nalo eng-are.
 The-road which-goes the-water.

What is a strip of hide like when the tip is wet?

A road which leads to the water.

[The poisoned heads of arrows are wrapped up in a strip of hide to keep the poison fresh. This strip is narrow and long, and it is wetted at one end with saliva to make it adhere.

There is some play on the word *kutuk*, which refers to the point of the arrow, the end of the strip of hide, and the mouth.]

- No. 15.** Einosa en-gop en-gima, neiñgwari
Enigma. It-has-eaten the-earth the-fire, and-it-leaves-thither
 naikoro.
 which-is-done-together (or something).

Reply. E-or.
The-bare-spot.

What escapes a prairie fire ?
A bare spot on which no grass grows.

No. 16. Naiperipera ti-abori en-gima.
Enigma. Which-rolls-from-side-to-side under the-fire.
Reply. E-minyor naya 'ng-onyek.
The-omental-fat which-hurt the-eyes.

What meat rolls about as if in agony when it is being cooked ?
Fat, for its eyes (bubbles) hurt it.

No. 17. Namununa te-'ruat.
Enigma. Which-has-folded-itself in-the-bed.
Reply. El-lashei natabolutuo 'l-ayok.
The-louse which-they-have-uncovered the-boys.

What is the thing which hides itself in its bed ?
The louse which the boys uncover.
[Ut pulex in ruga cutis se celat, sic puella in lecto iuvene aggresso.]

No. 18. Namununa te-'sundai.
Enigma. Which-folds-itself in-the-wall.
Reply. Eng-apyani natala e-ñgorore.
The-widow who-missed the-shooting (or cupping).

What hides itself against the wall of the hut ?
The widow who was not present when blood was extracted from an ox.

[The Masai drink the hot frothing blood direct from the live cattle. After tying a leather ligature tightly round an animal's throat, an arrow is shot into one of the superficial veins of the neck. When the arrow is pulled out, the blood gushes forth, and is collected in gourds.

The blood is drunk greedily by all present, but who will give any to the widow ?]

No. 19. Nyeinna en-dōki nashal natii
Enigma. This-here the-thing which-is-clammy which-is-there
eng-aji inyi, nimidolita.
the-hut your, and-you-are-not-seeing-it.

Reply. Ol-oiriiri.
The-lizard.

What is the clammy thing which is always in your hut and which you don't notice ? The lizard.

No. 20. Nyelido, nyelle.
Enigma. That-there, this-here.

Reply. Ol-oijilili le-kulle.
 The-drop of-milks.

That there is the drop of milk at the bottom of the gourd ; *this here* is the drop when the gourd has been tipped up into the mouth.

[Note the play on the words *nyelle* and *kulle*.]

No. 21. Oghishi ñigoto nairenge.
Enigma. Poor the-mother who-gives-blood.

Reply. E-mala nañgorishoreki, nelau
 The-gourd which-was-shot-for, and-it-will-miss

o-sarge.
 the-blood.

Why is the mother weak ?

Because they did not catch the blood in the gourd.

No. 22. Samburumburi saandetwa.
Enigma. Butterfly resemblance.

Reply. Ol-kila loo'-musetani.
 The-garment of-the-beads.

What resembles a butterfly ?

A garment with beads worked on it.

[It is only the best dressed girls who wear skins ornamented with beads, and when they move about from one hut to another, they are supposed to resemble butterflies.]

No. 23. Tamanai te-idya-matwa
Enigma. Go-by-a-roundabout-route round-that-part

o-'l-doinyo, pe kitumó
 of-the-mountain, and we-get (or meet)-one-another

edo 'ng-aik.
 they-are-blood-red the-hands.

Reply. Il-lama.
 The-fruit-of-a-blood-red-colour.

What will your hands be like if we meet after you have gone round that part of the mountain ? The lama fruit.

[This is a common wild fruit (*Ximenia americana*, L.) of which the Masai are very fond. It stains everything a blood-red colour.]

No. 24.	Tununuko	'n-dapan,	maape	Kinōkop.
<i>Enigma.</i>	Fold	the-skins,	let-us-go	Kinangop.
<i>Reply.</i>	'N-gidoñgo	oo-'n-diain.		
	The-tails	of-the-bitches.		

What is folding up the skins and going to Kinangop like?
The bitches' tails.

[This is a well-known saying amongst the Masai of Kilima Njaro. Kinangop (or better, Kinokop or Kinobop) is the name of a sub-district near Naivasha, and is some 300 miles from Kilima Njaro. It is supposed that the way there would resemble a bitch's curly tail.]

1905 Merrick Hausa.pdf

HAUSA PROVERBS

BY

CAPTAIN G. MERRICK, R.G.A.

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. LTD.

DRYDEN HOUSE, 43, GERRARD STREET, W.

1905

HAUSA PROVERBS.

- 1 A yi, a gamma, ta fi takamma, gobé a koma.
To do, to finish, is better than "don't care, come back to-morrow."

Takamma, swagger: it comes to mean here not to work hard so as to show independence and disregard for authority.

Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.

- 2 Hakki da ka rena shi kan soni maka ido.
The grass which you disregard will injure your eye.

Don't forget to take all precautions.

No man or thing is too insignificant to be altogether disregarded.

- 3 Maichi da uwa ba shi kuka'n soodi.
He who eats with his mother will not have to ask for the *soodi*, for she will give it to him as a matter of course.

Soodi, the surplus or remainder of anything. The usual way of eating is for every one to dip his hand in turn into a calabash until the food is finished: the scrapings are the soodi, and this the child of the house would naturally get.
Vide 70.

- 4 Ba afafi giandumma ran taffia.
The day of starting is not the time to prepare the *giandumma*.

Giandumma, the gourd or calabash with a narrow neck, which all carriers use for water on a march. Fafewa, hollowing out the pith from the inside of the giandumma.

Don't leave a thing till the last minute.

5 Rua ba su yami banza.

Water does not get bitter without a cause.

There is reason for everything.

6 Kadda gammu ya birkitchi maidemmi.

Don't let the *gammu* upset the carrier of a bundle of corn.

Don't let the *gammu* become so big that it eventually gets bigger than the load that is being carried.

Don't keep on giving things away until you become the poor man and the man to whom you give the rich one.

Don't keep on giving your subordinates more and more power until at length they are more powerful than you are.

Gammu, the pad the carrier puts between his head and his load. It is usually a small cushion stuffed with chaff or cotton, sometimes merely twisted grass.

7 Yawa shi kan sa zarre ya ja duchi.

Quantity makes the cotton draw a stone.

Unity is strength.

8 Makafo ya rassa ido, ya che ido na wari.

The blind man lacks eyes, he says eyes stink.

Na might perhaps be written 'na, as it is the abbreviation of yana, tana, &c., or rather it is more usually used in conjunction with a personal pronoun than by itself.

Sour grapes.

9 Maidoki ya koma kutarr.

How are the mighty fallen.

- 10 Na dumka riga babu wuya, wonda ya yanka wuya shi sa ma kainshi.

I have sewn a *riga* without a neck, let him who cuts a neck for it put it on.

The *riga* is a shirt with a hole at the top for the head to be put through: if made without this wuya or neck, one would have to be cut before the *riga* could be put on.

If the cap fits put it on.

- 11 Ba don "riga'n domin" ba, da mutum ya mutu masiachi.

If it were not for *riga'n domin* a man (a fellow) would die poor.

Riga'n domin, because of some one else, for some one else's sake, through some one else's influence.

Na shigga "riga'n domin" wuri'n Abdu.
I got it through Abdu.

- 12 Ba na fassa randa'n daki ba, na waje ba ta shigga ba.

I won't break the *randa* of the house until the one outside (new one) has been brought in.

Don't be off with the old love until you are on with the new.

This might very well be said to a guide, who asks if he may go when the village to which he is guiding you is reached: meaning, "I can't let you go until I get another guide, for otherwise I may be left without any one at all."

Randa, a big water jar about 2 ft. high, which always stands in the "gidda": it is too big to be conveniently carried, and if moved when full would probably break.

- 13 Ba ayi ma birri burrtu.

Don't do *burrtu* to a monkey.

Burrtu, a black bird with a large bill. It stands about 2 ft. high, and is usually seen on the ground: when it rises a white patch shows on each wing. Hunters put the skin on their head when they stalk game.

You don't get the better of him in that way.

- 14 A buggi karifi da saura'n zafi, en ya foochi sai a wohalla.

Strike while the iron is hot.

- 15 Idan rua ya zubar, ya ber tulu, ya yi keau.

Even if the water is spilt, as long as the tulu is not broken, no harm.

Tulu, the jar used for carrying water from the well or stream; it has a small mouth. Different districts have different patterns.

Don't cry over spilt milk. That can be remedied.

- 16 Rigaya zua fadda ba shi ne samu'n sariki ba.

"First come to the council" does not always "catch king."

First come is not always first served.

Though a man may have been in the king's service a long time, it does not follow that he will always have the king's ear.

- 17 Ba domin tsawo akanga wata ba.

The moon is not seen because of great stature.

It is by no merit of yours that you have done that. Any one can do it.

- 18 Fawa biu tana bata hankali'n kuda.

Two pieces of meat confuse the mind of the fly.

To hesitate between two things, two courses, &c.

- 19 Da kuka'n kura, da batchewa'n akwia duka daia ne.

The cry of the hyena and the losing of the goat are one and the same.

Give a dog a bad name.

- 20 Gurgu ba shi koiya gurgu taffia.

The blind leading the blind.

- 21 Rama ba mutua ba.

Being thin is not dying.

Appearances are deceptive.

- 22 Rijia ta bayes, gugaa ta hanna.

The well gives, but the bucket refuses.

The great man orders a distribution of food, money, &c., but his agent does not issue it.

Might be used when an official, who is dependent on an interpreter, gives an order; meaning "he may give an order, but I doubt whether it will be carried out."

- 23 Ya zamma wandu dei dei da gatto'n kowa.

He is (a pair) of trousers that fit every one's thighs.

He is so powerful that every one fears him.

- 24 Mai abu kan san barra.

A man with wealth will always get a servant.

San, a contraction of samu.

- 25 Mai akwia ya yi taffia derri, balé mai kura.

If the owner of a goat is not afraid to travel by night, why should the owner of a hyena be (seeing that night is the usual time for a hyena to move about)?

- 26 Da ayi jiranka ga abinchi, gara akayi ka jira'n abinchi.

Better that you should be made to wait for food
than that food should be made to wait for
you.

- 27 En chi dadi da yawa en wohalla, gara en chi babu dadi wonda ni ke koshi.

Better to eat something not tasty which is enough,
than to eat something tasty which upsets
me.

Enough is as good as a feast.

- 28 Mai tambaya ba shi bata, sai dei asheerinsa ka tona.

He who asks does not go wrong, but his secret is
dug up.

The first part of this proverb is very commonly used
by itself with the meaning, "Always ask if you
are in doubt."

The meaning, as it stands, is—before you ask for infor-
mation be quite sure that it will not give away
your object, i.e. if you wish to conceal it.

- 29 Rami'n mugunta a ginnashi gajere.

Dig the hole of evil shallow.

- 30 Kango'n Allah maiwuya'n tuk-yéwa.

The place which Allah has made a *kango* is hard
to fill.

Kango, any place which has at one time been in-
habited, but is now deserted.

An unlucky man will always be unlucky.

31 Ganni'n ido ba shi hanna chi'n kai.

Seeing the eye does not prevent one from eating the head.

If a chief's follower was brought before a judge and his master came to ask that he might be let off, this might be said to him, meaning, "Though I see you I shall still do justice, I shall not let him off."

32 Zakarra a-rataye ya yi koatuh?

Can a cock slung by both legs peck at corn?

Kotu or koatuh, the pecking action of hens eating grain.

Can I do it in my present position?

33 Iya rua fidda kai.

He, who can swim, can save himself.

Fidda, a contraction of "fita da."

34 Da kura tana da magani'n zawo, da ta yi ma kanta.

Had the kura the means of curing itself of *zawo* it would have done so.

Physician heal thyself.

35 Daki ya tasshi, ragaya ya zona?

Will the *ragaya* remain when the hut has started on a journey?

Will the child remain when his father goes away. Is it likely that I shall remain here when you, my master, are going?

Ragaya, the net or basket of string which will be found hanging from the roof of any hut; all kinds of odds and ends are put into it. *Vide* 188.

36 Asa zuchia ta chi, shi ya kawo ji'n yungwa.

To make the heart eat is to bring a feeling of hunger.

Wishing for a thing makes one feel the want of it.

37 Enna darra'n gammi.

Might be said to a man who claims to have met you before and you deny it; it is as if one said, "How can I have met you, it would be as easy for the pebbles of the darra board to meet."

The idea is, I think, that as the pebbles in the game of darra are separated by the partitions of the board, so have you been from the man you are speaking to.

Darra is universal throughout the Central Sudan. The board is made either of wood or is merely a double row of holes in the ground. Small brass models of darra boards are among the many Ashanti "weights."

38 Zua da kai wonda ya fi sako.

Going oneself is what is better than a substitute.

The master's eye. Personal supervision.

39 Sai anbatta akan nemi mashiggi.

One only seeks a guide when one has lost the road.

Mashiggi, a guide.

40 Zaki ba na seye ba, ba a-rena gwanda'n daji.

Sweet food that has cost you nothing is not to be despised even if it is only a bush pawpaw.

Zaki has the guttural "kaf," and means sweet food.

41 Gaadu ba na uwa ba, ba na uba ba, en anbaka alura ka godé.

An inheritance, which does not come either from your mother or your father, you are thankful for it even if it is only a needle.

- 42 Babba juji ne, kowa ya zo da shaara sai ya zubar.

The chief (or head of the family) is like a dust-heap, every one comes with his sweepings and deposits them.

The master is the recipient of all complaints and troubles.

- 43 Dauda'n gora achikki akan sha shi.

The dirt inside a *gora* is drunk inside.

Swallow your wrath.

Gora, a water-bottle; note that it is pronounced differently from gora, a male bamboo.

- 44 Sai kwarrri ya chikka, saanan akan yi zagia.

Only when the quiver is full do you make a *zagia*.

Don't give anything away until your own wants are satisfied.

Zagia, when a quiver is full it is usual to pull two or three arrows out a little so that they may be easily got at if suddenly wanted; this projection of arrows is called the *zagia*.

- 45 Kunkurru ya so dambé, ba shi da yasa.

The tortoise wishes to fight with his fists, but he has no fingers.

Impotent wrath.

- 46 Gero ya saba da ganni'n rua tun ba na sürfeshi ba.

Gero (millet) has seen (has been familiar with) water before it was put into the turmi to have its skin taken off.

If a man asks one for anything and is refused, he may make this reply, as much as to say, "All right, I can get plenty more."

Sürfee, the operation of taking off the "*dusa*."

Apropos of this, there is a saying describing the disadvantages of being without a wife. "Sissikka, sürfee, bakachi, tankaddi, nikka, dakika, dauka'n rua aiki'n gobro (or goro).

Clearing the chaff, taking off the *dusa*, sifting the gari, winnowing, rubbing on stones, pounding in a turmi, are all work which a bachelor has to do.

- 47 Komi ya ke chikkin dan kaza, shafu ya deddi da sanninshi.

Whatever there is inside a chicken the hawk has been familiar with it for a very long time.

There is not much that you can teach me about that.

- 48 Ansan baki yana da ja'n myo, akan zubar da fari.

It is well known that the mouth has red spittle (or that it looks red in the mouth), still white comes out.

Though spittle in the mouth looks red, still, when it comes out, it is white, so, though you are hot with anger, let it come out cool.

I know you are angry, still forgive him.

- 49 Gishiri nema (na yi ma) mai'n kaddé daria'n rana, randa rua ya zo gishiri ya ji kumia.

Salt laughs at *mai'n kaddé* while the sun shines, but when rain comes it hides its head.

Mai'n kaddé, shea butter.

He laughs best who laughs last. *Vide* 63.

- 50 Inda gainya'n doka daia ya fadi, asa gainya'n dorowa derri ba rufe wurinn.

Where one *doka* leaf has fallen, it would require more than 100 *dorowa* leaves to fill its place.

100 men will not fill the place of the man who has been removed or died; you will never get one so good.

The leaf of the *doka* is a large flat one; that of the *dorowa* is like that of an ash tree or a fern; when a leaf falls all the side pieces (pinnæ) fall separately.

Wurinn, note the accent on the "inn," meaning "in that place."

51 Idan gamba tana da dadi a nono, nono ma
yana da dadi a wuri'n gamba.

If *gamba* is pleasant (to drink) with sour milk,
sour milk is pleasant to drink with
gamba.

Gamba, the flour of millet, to which water has been
added.

If he likes me, I like him. If he agrees, I do.

52 Ba rabbo ba, dan wâbi ya fada a wutta.

That was not fated to be my share: it is as though
a *dan wabi* had fallen into the fire and
been burnt to death.

It was fated that I should not get it; it is no loss.

Dan wabi, a child that is fated to die.

Mai wabi, a woman whose children die one after
another.

Itachi'n wabi, a tree whose fruit falls off without
ripening.

53 Wurinda baki ya karkatta, nan myo kan
zubar.

Wherever the mouth turns, there spittle is
expectorated.

54 Ganni ya fi ji.

Seeing is better than hearing.

To be able to say that you have seen a thing with your
own eyes is better than only to know by hearsay.

The full formula is—Q. Ka ganni? A. Na ganni.

Q. Ka ji? A. Na ji.

The questioner now says—ganni ya fi ji—seeing is
believing.

55 Zamma dubara, ta fi karifi.

Stratagem is better than brute force.

Na yi maka dubara. I give you a bit of advice.

56 Kadda ya yi chikki, ya haifu wuya.

Don't let him conceive and bring forth trouble.

Don't do something that you will be sorry for after-
wards.

57 Ganni ba chi ba ne.

To see is not to obtain.

To see a thing does not necessarily mean that you will obtain it. Chi, literally to eat, often means to obtain.

58 Yo da gobé māgani'n wata rana.

To-day and to-morrow are the cure for *wata rana*.

Wata rana signifies an indefinite time,—Sai wata rana,—we will meet again some day. The idea is that every day that passes brings “wata rana” nearer.

59 Tilas ba ta rassa daki'n kwana.

Compulsion does not lack a house to sleep in.

Necessity knows no law.

Tilas is often pronounced chilas: more especially in Kabbi and Ariawa.

60 Tilas kaia'n gwéwa, yaro na ganni, babba na dauka.

Compulsion is the load of *gwéwa*; the boy looks on while his master carries it.

Gwéwa, elephantiasis of the testicles; it is a disease from which a boy could not suffer, and is a load which cannot be transferred to him.

Na, *Vide* 8.

61 Kaffa'n woni ba ta wa woni taffia.

The legs of one man are no good to another for walking.

62 Idan dei a chini (ni=ne) ba a seyer ba, kaza ta fi doki.

If it is a matter of eating and not of selling, then the hen is better than a horse.

Everything has its own peculiar uses.

63 Mankaddé ba ya saba da tandu ba.

The *mankaddé* is not used to (fit for) the *tandu*.

Mankaddé, or more correctly mai'n kaddé, is a grease or ointment (shea butter).

Tandu, a narrow-necked leather bottle.

If shea butter were put in a tandu it could not easily be got out; it is not a suitable receptacle for it. *Vide* 49.

64 Da wutta da sebbi ba su zamma wuri daia.

Fire and cotton cannot live in the same place.

Sebbi, cotton in the fluffy state before it is carded.

65 Da kwoi da duchi ba su gamma wuri daia.

Eggs and stones will not stay in the same place.

66 Dan kuka ba shi zamma dan tsamia.

The fruit of the kuka and the fruit of the tsamia are different.

The kuka, the baobab or monkey bread tree; tsamia, the tamarind. The fruit of the former is very large, that of the latter small, in a pod like peas.

67 Taba ta banbanta da gari'n gero.

Tobacco and the flour of millet are very different things.

Tobacco is often used in the form of snuff, so that the outward appearance of gero flour and tobacco would not be very different.

68 Kowa ya seye raria ya san ta zubar da rua.

Every one who buys a *raria* knows that it does not hold water.

Raria, any kind of sieve; also the passages under the walls of a town which allow water to drain off.

You know what you are about. You are doing it with your eyes open.

- 69 Ni ba ni so na shigga shegulla, giandumma tana rawwah takkai.

I don't want to join in that business, it would be like a *giandumma* playing with *takkai*.

Takkai, when any kind of feast or rejoicing is in progress, among other means of adding to the noise, men often beat short sticks together, these sticks are called takkai.

Giandumma, the hollowed out gourd used to carry water on a journey. It is very fragile. Vide 4.

- 70 Wonda ya yi tuo achikkin tulu ya san yenda za ya yi kwāshashi.

Whoever makes *tuo* inside a *tulu* knows how he is going to get it out.

Tulu, an earthenware jar with a narrow mouth.

Tuo is eaten from a calabash. Each of the party in turn puts in his hand. The mouth of the *tulu* will not admit the hand, and it could only be extracted with great difficulty.

You seem to be doing a foolish thing, but I suppose you know what you are about. Vide 3.

- 71 Tunku ya san suri da za ya yi mashi kāsshi.

The tunku knows the hillock which is his own *wuri'n kasshi*.

The tunku, a kind of wild cat. It is said to be very strong smelling.

Suri, an ant hill.

Foxes smell their own holes.

- 72 Madaki shi ya san enda rua ke zubar mashi.

The owner of the house knows from where the water drips on him.

Every one knows his own business best.

- 73 Yi nema'n katanga enda ka fi karifi'n tulu.

Seek for *katanga* where you are stronger than a *tulu*.

Katanga, a fragment of pottery.

Only ask for a thing when you are likely to get it.

Ne ultra sutor crepidam.

- 74 Kworria ta bi kworria, en ta bi akoshi sai ta mutu.

The calabash follows the calabash, when it follows the wooden basin it gets broken.

Don't meddle with anything which is outside your sphere.

- 75 Mutum ba shi shigga mahauta shi ji'n tsoro'n jinni.

A man does not enter a slaughter house if he fears blood.

- 76 Mutum da bunu a gatto ba shi gudumowa gobarra.

A man with grass on his *gatto* does not help (to put out) a conflagration.

- 77 Waja'n suka'n doki ba waja'n suka'n jirigi ba.

A horse at full speed is a very different thing to a boat at full speed, i.e., you cannot compare the two.

- 78 Mi ya gamma kifi da kaska?

What will bring a fish and a tick together

Meaning as in 77.

- 79 Aboki'n gammi'n maddi, gāri'n tamba.

Maddi, a paste made from the fruit of the *dynnia* tree and very black.

Tamba, a herb used for seasoning. It is cultivated, and when made into a paste is also very black.

The two mixed together make a drink.

Where you find the one you find the other.

Birds of a feather flock together.

- 80 Mugu ya san makwanta'n mugu.

Evil knows the sleeping place of evil.

- 81 Aboki'n gammi'n masa suré.

Māsa, baked cakes; we should call them pancakes.

Suré, a herb used in their seasoning.

Exactly the same meaning as 79.

- 82 Tumbi ba shi ki'n sanfo.

The guts don't refuse (or object to) a basket.

Same meaning as the last three.

- 83 Dei-dei dei-dei kunua'n doki.

A case of six of one and half a dozen of the other.

- 84 Halli zani'n duchi ne, ba mai iya shafewa,
ba mai iya shafeyshi.

Disposition (or a man's nature) is like the grain of stone, no one can rub it out or efface it.

- 85 Albassa ba ta halli'n rua.

The nature of an onion and water are different
(though one grows by the help of the other).

- 86 Kowa da rananshi, mai ido daia ya léka buta.

Every one has his peculiarities, a man with one eye squints down the mouth of a buta.

Buta, another word for gora, a water bottle.

- 87 Halli ya rigaya foro, halli'n mutum kowa da nasa.

A man's disposition, or nature, precedes his education, and every one has his own.

- 88 Tun randa akayi ginni, ranan akayi zāni.

The marks on the mud wall are made at the same time as the wall.

As walls are built up of mud, which is laid on a handful at a time, the marks of the fingers are all over the surface, and when the mud dries they remain there.

The same meaning as the last. You can't change the leopard's spots.

- 89 Kowa ya ga shamuwa da kwūshinta ya ganta.

Every one who sees the raven knows it by its red legs.

Much the same meaning as the last. Every one has some peculiarity by which they are known.

- 90 Kowa ya ga zabua da zāninta ya ganta.

Every one who sees the guinea fowl sees it with its marks.

Same meaning as 89.

- 91 Woni tsuntsu ya ke gudu rua, agwagwa rua ta ke nema.

Some birds avoid water, the duck searches for it.

Every one to his own taste.

- 92 Kowoni tsuntsu ya yi kuka'n giddansa.

Every bird has the note peculiar to its own kind.

If you are born among people who weave, farm, &c., you will do the same.

- 93 Kowa da kiwo da ya karbeshi, makwochi'n mai akwia ya seye kura.

Every one has the food that suits him, sometimes the neighbour of a man who has a goat will buy a kura.

- 94 Fura'n danko, a shekarra dama, ba shi faro-faro, sai bakki'n rua.

The *fura* of rubber, kneaded for a year, does not become white, but remains black water.

Fura, a sort of dry porridge made of the flour of guinea corn, rice, &c. It is usually eaten mixed, with sour milk or water. Fura'n danko, a lump of rubber. Rubber is cleaned, to a certain extent in water before being offered for sale.

95 Sata ta sache sata.

Does dog eat dog.

96 Shafu ba ya chi'n rabbo'n kunkurru.

The hawk does not eat the food of the tortoise
(because their tastes are different).

97 Yungwa na tanda kishinrua.

Does hunger lick (the hand of) thirst.

If one beggar had just received something and another
asked him for a share he might reply as above.

Na, see 8.

98 Sabani'n kiwo shi ya sa kura ba ya chi birri
ba.

Difference of diet saves the monkey from being
eaten by the kura.

Because it is so different that they never meet in
getting it.

99 Zamma da mai dauka'n kanwa shi ya kawo
ja'n kai.

Living with a man who carries potash is what
makes your head red.

Carrying potash on the head makes the hair red.

You can't touch pitch without being defiled.

100 Zamma da mai zakkanku shi kan kawo
dandanna.

Associating with a man who has *zakkanku* makes
you want to taste it.

Zakkanku, the ash of the wood of a small thorny
shrub called *kaia'n rakumi*: this is kneaded into
small cakes and used as medicine.

101 Idan angulu ta bia maka maradi, zabua ta
taffi da zānenta.

If the vulture fulfils your desire, the guinea fowl
will pass you by, (beautiful) marks and all.

If you are satisfied to associate with such low people,
a better class will have nothing to do with you.

- 102 Gudu da marri ba shi magani'n bauta.
To run away with the *marri* on, is not a cure for slavery.
Marri, leg irons put on both legs. A man can only shuffle along with them.
- 103 Buzarré ba shi rabba jaki da kaia.
Bucking will not separate a donkey and its load ; for the owner will merely put it on again.
Don't kick against the pricks.
- 104 Tsimmi da kasshi chikki ba shi māgani'n yungwa.
Eking out (or saving up for another day) when your stomach is empty is not a cure for hunger.
- 105 A turri ba shi rabba karre da kura.
Throwing earth or sand on them will not separate a dog and a kura.
That's no good.
- 106 Ba aroko'n jinni ga fara.
Blood is not begged from a locust.
Blood from a stone.
- 107 Tsaria ba mu boyé ne ba.
The *tsaria*, we do not hide there.
Tsaria, the small opening through which fire is put under an earth bed.
All your efforts are futile. This might be said to a man, who had run away and hidden, after he had been discovered.
- 108 Kana saida bāba a rugga.
You are selling your indigo at a *rugga*.
Rugga, the temporary village of nomad Fulani. They only concern themselves with cattle and do not weave, dye, &c. ; it is therefore useless offering them indigo for sale.

- 109 Anyi berri'n tamba achikkin to-yi, babu mai iya sinchewa sai rua'n bazarra ya sauka.

Tamba seeds are left in *to-yi*, there is no one who can find them until the first rains come.

To-yi, a patch of bush burnt black.

Tamba, a grass with black seeds.

Looking for a needle in a bundle of hay.

- 110 Gudu da susa'n gusu ba shi yi.

Running and scratching oneself does not do.

You can't do two things at once.

- 111 Ba a gammu gudu da susa'n katerri.

Running and scratching one's thigh don't go together.

Same meaning as 109.

- 112 Ba asa yaya'n taura guda biu a baki.

You can't put the fruit of the *taura* in your mouth two at a time.

The *taura* tree has a large flat fruit which is edible.

- 113 Fura da zai (za ya) zubar ba shi tara'n guribi.

A pot of fura that is going to fall will not stay in the hole hollowed out for it.

Guribi, the scratching a hen makes to lay an egg in.

What must be must be.

- 114 Sallāti ba shi hanna karba'n rai.

Prayer won't prevent you from dying.

- 115 Da abinda mutum kan samu, da abinda kan samu nai, tun ran ta halita shi ke.

What a man gets and what happens to him is written from the day of his birth.

- 116 Danda (da wonda) za ya mutu, māgani ba ya seyseyshi.

The man who is fated to die medicine won't save him.

The same meaning as 114.

- 117 Ayi nitso a masekki?

Shall one drown in a *masekki*?

Masekki, a large calabash, generally used to hold water.

- 118 Ba a tasshi achikkin tsaria.

One cannot stand upright in the *tsaria*.

The *tsaria* is so narrow that no one, however small, could get into it.

You can't do the impossible. *Vide* 107.

- 119 Chi loma ya fi jira'n malmala da ba kārī ba.

To eat a mouthful is better than to wait for a *malmala* that is not cooked.

Loma, a mouthful.

Malmala, a large quantity of tuo cooked in a big pot for a feast, &c.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

- 120 Mugu'n gatarinka ya fi "sāre ka bani."

A bad axe of your own is better than one you have to wait for until the owner has finished with it.

Same meaning as 119.

- 121 Kofa'n wutta ta fi enda ba a fura ba.

The place where there is a fire is better than the place where a fire has not been lighted.

- 122 Kwoi a bakka ya fi kaza achikkin akwilke.

An egg in the mouth is better than a hen in the coop.

Same meaning as 119.

- 123 Zamma da mai rabbo ya fi “ga hannuna.”

To live with a man who shares (who is liberal) is better than always having to say “see my hand.”

- 124 Samu ya fi resshi.

“To have” is better than “not to have.”

- 125 Maisamu ya rigaya mainema.

“He who has” precedes “he who wants.”

- 126 Da babu wawa gara da wawa.

Better to have a fool than no fool at all.

Half a loaf is better than no bread.

- 127 Komi mugu’n bawa ya fi gidida’n wofi.

However bad a slave is he is better than “empty house.”

- 128 Komi tsannani’n jifa bissa kassa ta ke faddua.

However hard a thing is thrown into the air it always falls to the ground.

Tsannani, to stretch, of a string or rope.

Woni abu ya tsannancheni. Something troubles me.

Tsannana, hard times.

- 129 Idan ka ji “marhaba” ka ji “a issa lafia.”

If you hear “welcome,” you will also hear “May you reach home in safety,” i.e., the guest will not stay for ever.

- 130 Demmi baki’n rumbu ko yo ko gobé.

The bundle at the mouth of the *rumbu* may be taken any day.

Rumbu, the large earth receptacle into which bundles of guinea corn are put. The only means of getting at them is a small door or opening, so that the nearest ones will be taken first.

- 131 A juri zua rafi dei wata rana ayi berri.
Continual going to the stream one day there is a leaving.
Juri, jimri, yana da jimri, he is doing his best.
A juri, to keep on going.
- 132 Komi karko'n rua, ya koma kwarrie.
Water always finds its own level.
- 133 Banza ba shi kai zomo kasua.
"Do nothing" does not bring a hare to market.
Nothing can be done without work.
- 134 Da resshi'n taye akan ber araha.
For lack of asking prices bargains are lost.
Taye, to ask the price of a thing. Ataya minny shi, find out its price for me.
Na taya hamsa, I offer 5,000.
- 135 Sai ansha wuya akan san babba.
Greatness is only achieved by effort.
- 136 Sai anbugga akan san beedi.
Only by fighting can the better man be found out.
Ya bida shi, means he overcomes him.
- 137 Sai angamma jikki, akan san babba.
Who is the better man can only be decided by "body to body" (wrestling).
- 138 Wonda ya chi zomo ya chi gudu.
Whoever catches a hare has to run for it.
- 139 Ba da magana ba shi kai rakumi Asben ba, sai gammi da akala.
Talking won't take a camel to Asben, only acquaintance with the nose string.
The Asbenawa (Kel Geres or Kel Owi) are the great camel owners to the north of Nigeria. During the rainy months they remain in Asben or Air (situated about latitude 19°), and come down to trade in the dry.

140 Da resshi'n kirra karre'n baibai ya batche.
It is for lack of calling that the dumb man's dog gets lost.

141 Hang-yé (harara) ba shi kawo wonda ke da nesa.

Gazing at a man who is a long way off will not bring him to you.

142 Ayi taffia ya fi zamma.

"Move about" is better than "sit still."

An active (and therefore a willing) man is better than an unwilling.

143 Dan kuka shi kan ja ma uwanshi jifa.

It is the fruit of the kuka tree that causes its mother to be thrown at.

Any one who wants to get the fruit of the kuka tree throws stones till he knocks one down. The tree is difficult to climb, and the fruit, which hangs by a long stalk, is easily knocked down.

144 Dan usuli ya fi shiggégi.

The original inhabitant is better than a stranger.

145 Mutum ba shi soka'n chikkinshi, saanan shi komo shi yi kirari.

A man does not stick a knife into his stomach and then go and boast about it.

A man does not do an injury to, or make an accusation against a relation and then go and boast about it.

146 Jinni ya fi rua guibi.

Blood is thicker than water.

147 Mu dei bera'n rami daia, en ba agamma ashigga ba, agamma a fita.

We are mice of one hole, if we don't meet going in we meet going out.

If you refuse to lend a man something that he asks for, he might reply as above, meaning, "Any day you may want to borrow from me."

- 148 Akwia ta mutu, ta ber fata na sha'n wuya.
The goat has died and left its skin to encounter difficulties.

The skin being the children and family generally.

- 149 Hankuri'n wuya sai naka.
Only your own people will be patient under hard work.

- 150 Ba samu'n abinchi ke da wuya, wurinda zaka je ka chishi shi ke da wuya.

As the hen says, "It is easy enough to find food, but hard to get away to a place where you can eat it in peace."

Your friends and relations always want a share of your goods.

- 151 Dan uwa rebbi'n jikki ne, abinda ya tabbi waje daia, komi kankantanchi, sai ka ji zafi.

Relations are like a part of your body, if anything touches it, however small, you feel it.

- 152 Ma fi dadi'n rai dan uwa.
A man's relations are the pleasantest things on earth.

- 153 Dan uwa riga'n kaia (كَايَا) ne, en ka sashi ya sokeka, ba ka dama'n chirreshi, ka yer da shi.

Relations are like a coat of thorns, you put it on and it pricks you, you cannot (are not "fit" to) pull it off and throw it away.

- 154 Dodowa shina gaia ma manda bakki.

Dodowa, the small block of pounded dorowa seeds, sold in every market. They are very black.

Manda, a black salt from Bornu.

Pot calling the kettle black.

- 155 Daria'n darara, funtu daria'n mai riga.

To laugh at a laughing man is like a naked man
jeering at a man with a coat.

Meaning as in 154.

- 156 Madoatchi shina ré'da dumma.

Madoatchi, a bitter-tasting tree.

Dumma, a kind of calabash. Its inside is very
bitter.

Ré'da, to whisper, backbite, insinuate something
against.

Meaning as in 154.

- 157 Allah na mutane, jaba ta ga baki'n mijinta.

Allah made all men, the long-nosed rat laughs at
her husband's snout.

Meaning as in 154.

- 158 Abinda ba a-tamaha anyishi.

The unexpected has happened.

- 159 Anatamaha wutta makera, anka isketa
masaka.

One is expecting fire at a blacksmith's, one gets it
at the weaver's.

- 160 Rāmmammé kāda maikibba.

The very thin defeats the very fat.

The unexpected happens.

- 161 Anyi kunnu don auki, ya komo ya rassa
auki.

Kunnu was made so as to be in a great quantity,
it turns round and is not in great quantity.

Kunnu, gari and hot water mixed to form a drink.
It is made with a good deal of water so that
there shall be plenty of it.

Auki, plenty, a great quantity.

- 162 Na dauki karre don haushi, ya komo shina tunkwie.

I got the dog on account of its barking (i.e. I got it as a watch dog) ; it turns round and butts like a goat.

This has turned out contrary to my expectation.

- 163 Garaji ba karifi ne ba.

Garaji is not strength.

Garaji, hurry, worry.

- 164 Kwaramnia ba ta dakika.

Hurry does not stay at home.

More haste less speed.

Kwaramnia, mai kwaramnia, a hasty man, an impetuous man.

- 165 Mai so'n zafi ya iska nowyi (nowwa).

The impetuous man meets with delay.

More haste less speed.

- 166 Taffia sanu sanu kwana nesa.

Travelling slowly (and with due caution) you will sleep far.

- 167 Hankuri, hatchi'n tukunia ne, ba shi wuya'n k̄ariwa.

Patience is like grass for (lighting a fire to cook) a pot, it quickly comes to an end.

- 168 Wa ta dama dunia? Maras hankuri shi ne ta dama.

Who finds the world troublesome? the impatient man.

- 169 Hankuri'n kaia sai jaki.

The donkey surpasses all animals in his endurance in carrying a load.

- 170 Mahankurchi, mawadd'āchi.

The man with patience gets a competency.

Wadd'a, to have more than enough, to be rich.

- 171 Saba'n ido shi ke sa areni.

"Being used to of the eye" causes contempt.

Familiarity breeds contempt.

- 172 Sabo dei (da ya yi) shi ke sa arena mutum.

Same meaning as above.

- 173 Ya yi gudu'n garra ya fadi zaggo.

He runs from the *garra* and stumbles over the *zaggo*.

Garra, the small species of ant called white ant.

Zaggo, the large black one whose sting is rather painful.

Out of the frying pan into the fire.

- 174 Ya yi gudu'n chichifi shigga mache mache.
Ya yi gudu'n yéyefi shigga mamako.

He runs from the shower and enters a downpour.

The first form is as given in Kabbi; the second as given in Zaria.

- 175 Kaikai ya komo mai shakia.

Curses come home to roost.

Kaikai, the chaff of any grain.

Shakia, pronounce as in English shake.

Shika, to keep on pouring grain from one calabash to another so that the chaff may blow away; to winnow.

- 176 Bunsuru ya je berbera ya dawo da chikki.

The he-goat goes a-seeking the she-goat; he returns in child.

The biter bitten.

- 177 Masubamu anabasu, mata ta ga anaba miji kasshi.

The biter bitten, as a wife who sees her husband beaten (having beaten her).

- 178 Kowa ya débo da zafi, bakinsa za ya sa.
Every one must take the consequences of his own acts.
- 179 Wanka'n wutta zubawa daia ne.
Washing with fire; one pour.
Once bit twice shy.
- 180 So daia gujia'n makafo ta kona, na biu sai shi chita dainya.
Once the blind man's ground-nut is burnt (while he is cooking it) next time he eats it raw.
A burnt child fears the fire.
- 181 Dan buzrua'n akwia, en ba ya yi gashi koenna ba, ya yi a kattaterri.
Though the young of the hairy goat may not have hair everywhere, it has on its thighs anyhow.
The child has always some points of resemblance to its parents.
- 182 Dā da mahaifi ba arrabbāsu.
The son and his father are not to be divided.
Like father like son.
- 183 Ba a rerebbi da fusari'n maijégo.
Same meaning as above.
- 184 Da wasa da yaro, goum mu kwana da yungwa.
Better sleep hungry than play (or trifle) with a boy.
This saying is constantly heard. It shows the native objection to being too familiar with inferiors. They invariably take advantage of it.

- 185 Yaro mai'n kaza ne, en ya ji rana, sai shi narké.

A boy is like a hen's fat, when it feels the sun it melts.

A boy has not a man's endurance, any hardship will overcome him.

- 186 Zamma da mugu'n babba, yaro tsāk-yé dubara.

A boy whose master is harsh (evil) has to look out for himself (watch it).

- 187 Kadda a kwache ma yaro galma, en ya ji rana ya yayes.

Don't take a boy's *galma* from him (and do his work), for he will throw it down when he finds it too hot to work.

Let him alone, he will look after himself.
Galma, a hoe.

- 188 Kworria tagari tana ragaya.

A good woman stays at home like the *kworria* in the *ragaya*.

Ragaya, the string basket or net which will be found hanging from the roof of any hut; the woman of the house puts any odds and ends into it. There is often a small calabash or *kworria* at the bottom to hold the smaller articles. *Vide* 33.

- 189 Mata'n zamani ba tukunia ne ba, balé akwonkwossa, aji wonda ta fi kwahrie.

A woman is not like an earthen pot which we try by tapping to see which is strongest.

A man selling pots in the market taps them at the bottom to show that they are quite sound.

- 190 Karifi'n mata sai yawa'n magana.

The strength of a woman is in her tongue.

- 191 Hankuri'n wuya sai da.
Only a free man is patient of hard work (for he works for himself).
- 192 Komi akayi ma da, ya rama, amma banda ginna kushiéwa.
Whatever you do to a free man he will return it (whether good or evil) let us except, however, digging his grave (for if you dig his grave he will be dead).
- 193 Doki "da na sani" ba shi zua yaki.
The horse, "had I known," does not go to war.
Compare another similar construction, "Ba don sabbo da duchi ba, da ba na fadi ba. Had it not been for the stone I should not have fallen."
- 194 "Da na sani" kyéya ne, abaya akanbershi.
"Had I known" is like the back of a man's head, it is always left behind.
Kyéya, the back of the skull.
- 195 Allah ya tseremu da "da na sani."
Allah preserve us from "had I known."
- 196 Rena kamma ka ga gaiya.
Despising on account of appearance you see *gaiya*.
Appearances are deceptive.
If a man gets the better of you one day and some other day you get the better of him, you are said to "ka rama gaiya."
Ya rama mashi gaiya. He got something back on him.
- 197 Karmammé da nowyi'n duchi, alura da nowyi'n galma.
A guinea corn stalk as heavy as a stone, a needle as heavy as a hoe.
Two things which one would expect to find light. He does not look as if he could, but he can.

- 198 Halaamu'n karifi ga maikibba.

The appearance of strength is to the fat man.

Same meaning as 196.

- 199 Gungummi'n ayaba, tsofua na ganninka ta kwana da dari.

O log of the plaintain, the old woman sees you, she will sleep cold.

The log of a plaintain tree is full of sap and would never burn. The old woman sees the log from a long way off, goes to it and finds it useless. Her movements are so slow that she has no time to get another.

Na, usually tana. The word is also used by itself in the same way as "ke." *Ide* 8.

- 200 Rama chiuta ga mai chiuta, ibada ne.

To return evil for evil is a praiseworthy action.

- 201 Na yi maka chikki a gwiwu, mai wuya'n haifua.

I will make a stomach (swelling as if with child) on your knees, from which the bringing forth will be painful (difficult).

I will do you an injury, and you will not be able to retaliate (or which will give you great trouble).

- 202 Ni da rikewa kafo, woni ya yi t̄asa?

Am I to hold the horns while someone else gets the udder.

Am I to do all the work, &c.

- 203 Ba na gasso gado dan keeshia ya hau.

I won't make the oven bed for my rival's son to get on.

Shi ya zamma keeshiansa ; he becomes his supplanter. When a man takes a second wife it may be said of the first, "Anyi mata keeshia."

Aboki'n keeshi, a rival or supplanter.

204 Woni da toosa, woni da karba'n riga.

Same sense as 202.

205 Wata ya seyray kankantchi'n garra.

Does the moon trouble itself about the punishment of an ant.

I can't trouble myself about such trifles.

206 Wuchiar rakumi ta yi nesa da kassa.

The camel's tail is far from the ground.

Same meaning as 205.

207 Wonda ya che ya iya hadié gātari, a rike masa koata.

If a man says he can swallow a pickaxe hold the handle for him.

If a man says he can do a thing, which you suspect to be beyond his powers, don't let him get out of doing it, keep him to his word.

208 Wonda ya che rino ba ya aiki ba, shi koma matsaya'n rino, shi tsaya, mu ganni.

Let the man who says the *rino* does not work get into its place. Will he stop there? we will see.

If you know so much about it do it yourself.

Rino, a three-pronged fork or skewer used for cooking.

209 Matsorachi rairai ne, ko ka chibrashi (churashi), idan ya ji sainyi sai ya wache.

The coward is like sand, even when you knead it together, if water is poured on it, it falls to pieces.

210 Gudu gado'n matsorachi, tsayawa na maikarifi'n zuchia.

To run is the couch of the coward, to stand fast, of the brave man.

- 211 Inda halli, muni keau ne, inda ba halli ba,
keau muni ne.

Where there is a (good) disposition ugliness is
beauty (or evil is good), but where there is
no disposition beauty is ugliness.

Handsome is as handsome does.

- 212 Ba keau ba ga daki'n gona, shi dei ya yi
māgani'n rua.

The farm shelter is not beautiful, but it keeps
out rain.

Daki'n gona, an erection of grass put up tempo-
rarily while the owner of a farm is working on it.
Farms are often many miles from the town.

Meaning as in 211.

- 213 Karami'n sani kunkummi ne.

Little knowledge is like *kunkummi*.

Kunkummi, the tying the hand to the neck, as is
done with prisoners.

- 214 Resshi'n sani ya fi derri duffu.

Lack of knowledge is darker than night.

- 215 Resshi'n sani shi kan sa makafo ya taka
sariki.

It is only lack of knowledge (knowing where he
is) which would make a blind man tread
on a king.

- 216 Ko a fadi a tasshi salka ya fi giandumma.

A *salka* is always better than a *giandumma*.

Salka, the leather skin for carrying water. It con-
tains more than the giandumma, and if it falls
does not break.

Giandumma. *Vide* 69.

- 217 Feeké ya fi kaia tsini?

Does a stick which has been sharpened surpass a
thorn in sharpness?

- 218 Ko ba a gwodda, linzami ya fi baki'n kaza.
Even without seeing it everyone knows that a bit
is too big for a hen's mouth.

It is pretty obvious.

- 219 Tun badduku ba ya mutu ba, akan ga
bōri'n tūmki da jekkansa.

The stork had its pouch before the leather man
died, i.e. it did not steal it from him.

Badduku, a sewer of leather. They carry their
tools in a leather bag.

Bōri'n tūmki, a kind of stork with a large red beak;
there is a pouch under this in which it retains
food.

- 220 Wonda ba ya san dundūffa ba, hakikan ya
san muria nasa.

Though you may not have met a celebrated man,
at any rate you will have heard his name.

Dundūffa, a large drum, too big to be carried while
it is being beaten.

- 221 Komi tsawo wuya, kai bissa.

However long the neck is, the head is above it.

- 222 Karambani akwia gaida kura.

Rashness, as when a goat greets a kura.

You are playing with edged tools.

- 223 Mai karambani shi kan rigaya mai kāri'n
kwana mutua.

Rashness is the precursor of sudden death.

- 224 Ban yi maka tona, en yi maka hadea ba?

I refused to chew it for you, do you think I will
swallow it?

- 225 Idan dei na rena kaza, ko romunta ba ni
so.

If I despise the hen, you don't suppose that I
will touch the stuff it has been seasoned
(cooked) with? i.e. its gravy.

226 Mai doki ya che dokinsa ya mutu, berri
dan chiawa.

If the owner of the horse tells us that his horse
is dead, how much sooner will the boy
who cuts grass for it (for his work is
finished).

227 Ban aiké fara debo mia, balé ta kawo
minny yokee.

I did not want you to do this, much less that you
should have had all this trouble.

I don't send a locust to fetch mia much less to fetch
yokee.

Yokee, the sticky inside of a kubéwa or calabash.

To carry mia would be a hard enough task for a
locust, but to carry yokee would be worse.

Kubéwa ya yi yokee, the kubéwa's juice is running.

Yana yokee, of the slow movements of a man who is
weak or weary.

228 Kwoi ya yi wayo, balé dan chiako.

If the egg is "smart," how much more so is the
young chicken.

229 Sai anchi moreean ganga, saanan akan
yadda kwongo.

Only when you have got the profits of drumming
will you throw away the *kwongo*.

To suck an orange dry. To desert a friend when he
is of no further use to you.

Kwongo, the wooden frame of a drum.

230 Kworria wonda akaginna rijia, ba a shan
rua da shi.

The calabash with which the well has been dug,
water is not drunk from it.

When a well is being dug the earth is drawn up to
the top in calabashes.

To cast aside old friends who have served their turn.

231 Wonda akoi chiwo chikkinsa ba shi rena māgani.

He who is sick does not despise medicine.

232 Wonda yaƙfada rijia, ko anbashi kaifi'n takobi, (ya kamashi.

A man who falls into a well will seize even the edge of a sword.

Clutch at straws.

233 Da yéyéfi kwogi kan chikka.

Small showers fill the stream.

Perseverance finishes work. *Vide* 174.

234 Itachi'n da akanyi chokali da shi, kamma'n chinya ke, da sassakka ya kārī.

The stick out of which a spoon is made, though it be like a man's thigh, is finished (becomes a spoon) by whittling.

Same meaning as 233.

235 Allah'ba ya ba gwanni'n tona tsaba.

Allah does not give the expert in chewing any grain.

A man who is a good rider (or good at anything) must not expect that Allah will give him a horse, he has already given him his skill.

You can't have everything.

Tsaba, grain, or cowries in a calabash.

236 Samu ya fi iyawa, hawa'n doki machiji.

"To have" is better than "to be able," as a snake (which cannot ride) riding a horse.

237 Komi lalachewa'n māsa ya fi kasshi'n shanu.

However bad *māsa* may be they are better than cow's dung.

Masa, see 81, round cakes.

238 Ba a wasosu'n booshia da mai agalémi.

No one scrambles for a hedgehog with a man who has a leather apron (to throw over it).

Wasosu, to scramble, plural of wasa.

239 Akwilki'n dundu wawa ka sa hannu.

Only the fool puts his hand into the henhouse with *dundu* round it.

You will be a fool if you do not keep out of that.
Dundu, a thorny bush.

240 Rijia na mahasadda, wawa ka sha rua da shi.

Only a simpleton will drink water at the well of the backbiter.

Same meaning as 239.

241 Koda zaki ya zamma wulakantachi, ba ya yi wasa da khinzeri ba.

Though the lion is humbled, he won't play with the pig.

I have not fallen so low as that.

242 Koda birri ya zamma wawa, ba ya yi wasa da itachi mai kaia ba.

Though the monkey has lost its wits, it is not such a fool as to play with a thorn tree.

243 Bera yana ganni'n raminshi, ba ya yi yerda wutta ta chishi ba.

A rat who is in sight of its hole will not allow the fire to catch him.

A man who sees safety ahead of him will make a last effort.

Ba ya yi yerda, he no agree.

244 Komi lalachewa'n giwa, ta fi kwando goma.

However small an elephant may be, it will fill more than ten hampers, when cut up.

Lalachewa, literally spoilt.

245 Komi mugu'n taya'n mahauchi, ba ya taya giwa deri bokkoi ba.

However bad at pricing a butcher may be, he won't price an elephant at 700 cowries.

246 Samu'n kai ya fi samu'n fula.

To have your life is better than to have your cap.

If the chief of a town has seized part of your property and you escape you will not be such a fool as to go back to try and recover it; for he will probably have you killed.

247 Asshe gwano ba shi ji'n wari'n jikkinsa.

Truly the *gwano* does not perceive its own smell.

A man does not see his own defects.

Gwano, a strong smelling ant.

248 Laifi tuddu ne, sai ka taka naka, saanan ka gani na woni.

Faults are like a hill, you mount on your own and then see other people's.

249 Muni tuddu ne, kowa nasa ya ke hawa, ya fadi na woni.

Evil is a hill, every one gets on his own and speaks about some one else's.

250 Kwanchia'n hankali da arne, shi ya kawo chi'n yankainshi.

Familiarity, or living with, the pagans makes you eat what they have killed, and so be defiled, as they have not "hallal'd" it.

Hankalina ya kwanta da kai, I like you.

251 Chiniki'n azni noma.

The only trade that the pagans know is farming.

252 Kilishi'n jaba dsōmi bōri'n gyedda, komi
kawa'n azni ya bershi.

The meat of the *jaba* steeped in bad *gyedda*,
however much the pagan wants (food) he
will leave it.

Such a combination is too much even for his stomach.
Gyedda, the seeds of a plant used for seasoning;
also used by itself as a food, not considered
very sustaining.

Jaba, *vide* 157.

253²⁵ Kua da kua ba ta chi'n kaia'n Buzu.

Calling out and calling out won't get the property
of a Buzu.

A peculiarity of the Buzawe is that, when looking
after their flocks and working in the fields, they
call out to each other a great deal.

The Hausas, not understanding their language, also
speak of their ordinary conversation as "kua."

You won't get the better of a man in that way, he
knows too much about it.

254 Na Ma'azu kasshi'n shanu.

The Nupes are like cow's dung—they are so
deceitful.

Cow's dung which has been exposed to the air has a
hard outside and a soft inside; so the manner of
a Nupe is sincere while his heart is false.

Ma'azu, a king of Nupe.

255 Wanzami'n Bohnu, ka sha' woni, ba a sha'
ka ba.

O barber of the Bohnu, you circumcize but no
one circumcizes you.

Bohnu, a district west of Nigeria.

256 Bohnu kasua da gado.

The stupid Bohnu bring their beds to market
with them.

257 Chasau shina rawwah, Sarra na kallo.

Shall Chasau dance with Sarra looking on.

These are the names of two well known dancers, of which Sarra was the best.

Do you think I am going to make a fool of myself before him?

258 Abinda Jeeka ke so, ba shi Buzu ke so.

The requirements of Jeeka and the Buzu are quite different.

Jeeka was a horse dealer; the Buzawe are slave dealers.

259 Buzu akoreka kua, en ka yi kora kua.

O Buzu, when you are chased you cry out, and when you chase you cry out.

The Buzu or Buzawe are the offspring of Tawarek females with black men.

See Barth, vol. i. ch. xiv., p. 343.

260 Fadda Gogo a kofar.

The scolding of Gogo at the gate.

Gogo, the name of a well-known "scold" in Kano.

261 Muna da nia (neea) ma-je Gwonja ya k̄asa Waterri.

We are full of great resolve, the traveller for Gwonja grows weary at the Waterri crossing.

Great promise, little result.

Gwonja, the kola-nut district near Ashanti.

Waterri, a stream close to Kano.

262 Zua fara da rani a Gherku, akache mi zata chi.

The arrival of the locust at Gherku in the dry weather, people say what will it eat.

Gherku, a town some three days from Zaria.

Ka yi zua'n fara da rani a Gherku. You are late there is nothing left for you.

- 263 Gidda'n Zahanna maiwuya'n zua, sai a nuna da karra.

Zahanna's village is hard to get at, people will only point it out with a cornstalk.

Zahanna, the village of Tanimo, a Kanuri famous for his warlike qualities; no one would conduct you to it, only point it out with a cornstalk.

- 264 Aboki'n kiyayi zamma'n zauri, ka san gussuri, ka ba hauri, gidida ba samu komi ba.

Sitting in a *zauri* is a thing to be avoided, there you get *gussuri*, you give it to your teeth, the *gidida* gets nothing.

Aboki'n kiyayi, a thing to be avoided.

Gussuri, the section of kola-nut given to every one sitting round: usually means supplies generally.

San, samu.

Husbands should not waste their time loafing in *zauris*, but look after their family affairs.

- 265 Idan gora tana rawwah, ba chikka ne ba.

If the bottle is shaking it will not be filled.

A rolling stone gathers no moss.

- 266 Ennua'n giginia na nesa ka sha sainyi.

The shade of the palm tree (*deleb*) only from a distance do you enjoy its coolness.

Said of a man who entertains strangers well, but neglects his own family.

- 267 Dan banza rairai ne, ko andunkullayshi, sai shi wache.

The "waster" is like sand, though he is kneaded together he falls to pieces.

- 268 Gaadu'n gidida, wohalla ga raggo.

To inherit a *gidida* is a trouble to a "waster."

Gidda, the compound containing several huts; it would include farms and establishment generally and would entail a good deal of labour.

269 Raggo ba shi chi'n abin ginna.

The "waster" has no use for digging tools.

270 Ya chi deri'n māsa, ya kāsa dauka'n deri'n tamfassua.

He will eat 100 māsa cakes, but if he is given 100 needles to carry he says he is tired.

Tamfassua, alura, needles.

271 Tuo'n girima miyatasa nama ne.

The present for the man whom you desire to honour should be a very good one.

The tuo of honour its mia (soup) is meat.

272 Kabbakk-yé'n girima ya fi kabbakk-yé'n kankantchi.

The big calabash of honour is better than one of punishment.

273 Kowa ya ke so mussaya da abin woni ya rena nashi.

A man who wants to exchange with some one else is dissatisfied with his own property.

274 Mai so'n shi chi doki'n woni nashi shi ke kai.

A man who wants any one else's horse brings his own (to exchange).

275 Dunia birgima hankaka, en ka ga fari ka ga bakki.

The world is full of changes and chances.

The hankaka, or crow, has a white breast, and if it rolls in the dust one sees first its black back and then its white breast.

- 276 *Dunia rawwah yan mata ne, na gaba shi koma baya.*

The world is like the play of children, the one in front often becomes the one behind.

- 277 *Alhaki da romo, ashigga iyaka wuya.*

The lawful wage, with a little added, will make a man work his hardest.

A tip is a good thing to make a man work his best.
Romo, tit-bit.

- 278 *A wanki kifi da ruanshi.*

Washing a fish with its own water.

Giving a present in return which is of less value than the one which has been given you. Or giving in return some present which has cost you nothing.

- 279 *A dauki kanwa'n baki (باقى), a ba awaki'n baki.*

To accept the present of potash which one stranger gives you and to give in return the goat which some other stranger has given you.

The custom of a traveller giving his host a present is universal. It is merely the equivalent of paying for board and lodging, only it is done in advance.

- 280 *Laifi'n babba, rowa, laifi'n yaro, kiwuya.*

The boy complains that his master is stingy, the master that his boy is lazy.

These are the two faults which masters and servants respectively find most objectionable.

- 281 *Kai ka ja rowa, ni kua ja mako.*

You are stingy, but I will wear you out.

- 282 *Chiwu mai tauri'n hantchi, ka nuna ka ki fadua.*

O *chiwu*, you are hard at the fork, you ripen but you do not fall.

Chiwu, a shrub very tough where the branches join.
Said to a stingy man.

283 Don gobé akeyi'n wanka'n derri.

It is because of to-morrow that one cleans up at night.

A man borrows a hoe (or any other article), he wants to do so again, so he brings it back as soon as he has finished with it, so that it may not be refused next time because he kept it too long the first.

284 Don tuo'n gobé akeyi'n wanka'n tukunia.

It is because of to-morrow's tuo that the pot is washed.

Same meaning as 283.

285 Talaka ba aboki, ko ka soshi, ran бүккi ka kishi.

You can't make a friend of a poor man even if you are fond of him; on a feast day you will dislike him.

286 Mai kwarka shi ne aboki'n maikiwuya.

The beggar is the companion of the loafer.

287 En anki funtu ran бүккi, ansoshi ran kwaba.

One may dislike the naked man on a feast day, but when it comes to kneading mud (for building a house) one will like him.

288 Onfani'n kwarka tari (tuari).

The beggar's weapon is his cough.

Beggars, if not attended to, always attract attention by coughing.

Onfani, anfani, use, also prosperous, fertile.

289 Da karre da daagummi duka malakka'n kura ne.

The dog and his collar are both the property of the kura.

290 Da kai da kaia duka malakka'n wuya.

The head and the load are both the possession of the neck.

291 Abinda ke chikkin aljifu duka malakka'n mai riga ne.

Everything that is in the pocket is the property of the coat man.

292 Ana mugunia shekarra, kwado ya ji rua'n zafi.

It has been a bad season (year), like a frog being in hot water.

293 Zomo ba shi fasshi da makasshinshi sai marātayinshi.

The hare is not angry with the man who actually kills him, but with the man who prompted him to do so.

This saying has given rise to a peculiar use of the word *rātaya* which usually means to hang or sling.

For instance, a man, being called by another, might call out in reply, *Wa ya kirra?* and be answered, *Ni ne!* He would then ask, *Rātaya ko da kanka?* meaning, Did you call me yourself or did some one tell you to?

A hare when killed is always carried slung by the hind legs; the man who slings it and carries it off is, presumably, the one who is going to eat it: he is the real cause of the hare's death, though some one else may have struck the blow.

294 Ba ni na kasshi zomo ba, rātaya akabani.

I did not kill the hare, it was given me slung.

I am only doing what I have been told to do; I can't help myself.

295 Sai anyi kamma'n kura, saanan akan chi akwia.

Only by doing as a kura will you get a goat.

296 Shigga uku goro (gobro) da yayé.

The bachelor with a weaned child has treble trouble.

Yayé, anyayéshi, he is weaned, his mother has stopped suckling him.

297 Hauka sania ta ga malka, ta yi gudu.

The silly cow when it sees rain coming runs (though it is useless to try to escape it in that way).

298 Ido ba mudu ba ne, ya san kima.

The eye is not a measure, but it knows what is small.

Kima, probably from the Arabic قِيَمَة, price; its signification here is "small."

299 Dabbenka ya ji mākubba.

To receive the finishing touch.

Dabbé, the beaten pebble floor of a hut.

Mākubba, the water in which the pods of the *dorowa* have been boiled or soaked. This water is used for putting on a floor or dabbé to harden and blacken it.

The dabbé is a good floor, but when mākubba is put on it is really good.

300 Tsuntsu da ya kirra'n rua, shi rua kan duka.

The bird that calls out for rain, the rain strikes it.

It gets more than it asked for.

301 Sabo turki'n wawa. *

Familiarity with a thing is the tethering stick of a simpleton.

302 Idan kunni ya ji, jikki ya tsira.

If the ear hears the body is saved.

If you do as you are told you will not be punished.

- 303 Idan ka ji makafo ya che “zo mu yi wasa’n jifa” ya taka duchi ne.

Beware of a blind man who says, “Let us play at stone throwing,” for he most likely has a stone under his foot.

Be on your guard against a man who invites you to compete at anything you know he is not generally good at.

- 304 Idan jifa shi kétarré kanka, ko kan wa shi fada.

As long as it does not hit you, let it hit whom it may.

- 305 Enna tukunia’n dammu, enna na guzza.

Where is the pot of the *dammu* and where is that of the *guzza*.

The *dammu* and the *guzza* are both lizards; the *guzza* is scaly, the *dammu* is not; they are much alike, the *dammu* being the smaller.

There is practically no difference between two things.

- 306 Aboki’n kuka ba a boyé masa mutua.

The man who is such a friend that he will weep for your sorrows, will you hide from him the fact that one of your family has died, and weep by yourself.

- 307 Kadda ka yi fasshi’n majibaari, wonda ya yi fasshi ya fadda wutta.

Don’t be (foolishly) angry, like a moth; the man who gets angry falls into the fire.

The moth flying against a light is supposed to be angry with it.

- 308 Ka aje tukwa kamma’n gauraka.

You have a crest like a crown bird.

You are very proud.

309 Gidda biu māgani'n gobarra.

The cure for a conflagration is to have two houses.

310 Waiwaiya māgani'n mantua.

Returning (for a thing forgotten) is the cure for forgetfulness.

311 Dauka'n wuya ba ya san gari da nesa.

A man who is carried on some one's neck does not notice the distance of a town.

As a horseman.

312 Ni da abina, ina so emba karre, emba doki.

My property is my own. I will do what I like with it.

313 Kun so dara, Allah ya hanna.

You wanted to laugh but Allah prevented you.

Said to a man who has had bad luck suddenly. He was quite secure in his happiness when some sudden misfortune happened to him.

314 Zona garinka mugu. Dan gujia ba mutum ne ba.

Get away, I don't want to have anything to do with you.

Dan gujia, a chacha player, mostly used in the northern dialects.

Chacha is not a game that a respectable man would be seen playing in public.

315 Koshi kan maida tsofo yaro.

Sufficiency, a good feed, will render an old man like a boy.

- 316 Yungwa shi kan maida yaro tsofo.
Hunger will render a boy like an old man.
- 317 Wayo kamma'n bera.
Cunning as a rat.
- 318 Rua ga wuya māgani'n ma ki wanka.
Water up to his neck is the cure for a man who
does not like washing.
- 319 Suka'n rua māgani'n hauka doki.
Gallop in water is the cure for a restive horse.
- 320 Kaffa ba ta zamma enda babu kassa.
The feet will not rest where there is no earth.
- 321 Rana'n wanka ba a bōyé'n tchibi.
One does not hide one's navel the day one
washes.
When you go before the judge do not hide the truth.
- 322 Dukawa'n wāda ba shi hanna ka tasshi da
tsawonka.
To salute a dwarf by bowing will not prevent you
from rising to your full height again.
It will not do you any harm to do that.
- 323 So kainka woni ya ki ka, ki kainka woni
ya so ka.
If you love yourself people will hate you, if you
are unselfish people will love you.
- 324 Zābe'n tummu'n derri.
To choose a bundle in the dark.
Tummu, a bundle of corn on the stalk.
Kai ma kanka zābe'n tummu'n derri.
You are taking a leap in the dark.

325 Mi na bissa ya chi.

What is the one above to eat.

If my master has no money, where am I to get it?

The idea appears to be that a servant would be sent up a tree to shake fruit down, the master being at the bottom ready to pick it up; if he ate it all, or if there was very little of it, there would be none for the servant when he descended.

326 Ganni en ba chi, karre kan kwana da yungwa.

To see and not to eat leaves the dog to sleep hungry. *Vide 57.*

327 Mutum da gishirinsa sai ya daffa kafo.

A man and his salt, he only cooks a horn with it.

Sooner than give you any of his salt he would waste it on cooking a horn.

328 Goro'n magana ga mabaki, kuruma sai ya danganna.

The kola-nut for talking is to the man who talks, the dumb man, to him only patience.

329 Kurdi'n gudu ka bai angarama, kirru yana ganni, ba ya karba ba.

The prize for running is given to the big horse, the small one looks on but gets nothing.

330 Saura'n kurdi ka ba wa zomo, kwado sai ya danganna.

The prize for swiftness is given to the hare, the frog has to be patient.

331 Allah shi ne maisani, ba bawa ba.

Allah is the one who knows everything, not man.

- 332 Zomo ba bawa'n giwa ba ne, dowwa suka tara.

The hare is not the slave of the elephant when they meet in the bush.

- 333 Mai abin rufe, shi ne ya ke kuka'n dāri, funtu ya ba gaskia ga itachi.

The man with a covering shivers, the naked man pins his faith to a fire.

- 334 Kishinrua ba ruanta da worigi, karba rangamma sai yungwa.

Thirst is not a thing to joke about, a man who gets goods in exchange for what he sells goes hungry.

- 335 Masoyi ya fi yerda.

One volunteer is worth ten pressed men.

- 336 Damina da zata yi alberka, tunda bazarra akanganni.

The rainy season which is going to be a good one is known when the first rains fall.

From the way a man begins his work you know whether he is going to make a good job of it.
Coming events cast their shadows before.

- 337 Alkemma bissa duchi, Allah shi kan bashi rua.

Allah will give water to the wheat on a rock.

Allah will look after you if no one else will.

- 338 Kwache goruba a hannu'n kuturu ba shi da wuya.

To snatch the fruit of the dum-palm from the hand of a leper is not hard.

Nothing to boast about.

339 Da sabo'n ginna gouma yaabi.

Better plaster up an old wall than build a new one.

Make the best of what you have.

340 A yerda káura rana'n tuo, shinkaffa abin marmarri ne.

Be content with what you have, you can't have everything.

Káura, a very red variety of guinea corn, sometimes called ibirni.

Marmarri, a luxury, a thing one wants but cannot always afford.

341 Fadda'n bata kai, gouma ka yi shiru da bakinka.

Rather be silent than enter into a controversy in which you will be worsted.

342 Idan gulbi ya hanna kétarré, ba ya hanna dawowa ba.

The stream may prevent you from crossing, but it cannot prevent you from retracing your steps.

There is a limit to every one's powers.

343 Idan māgani ya ki shaowa, ba ya ki zubar rua ba.

Medicine may be so nasty that it prevents your drinking it, but it can't stop your throwing it away (or it can't prevent your mixing it with water so as to be able to drink it).

I can't do so and so, but I can and will do so and so.

344 Mainema'n rangamma ba shi hanna chiniki.

Because a man only wants to barter there is no reason why you should not do business with him.

345 Sai anbatta ke bauta.

A fool is always a slave.

In old days a man who lost himself in Hausa was probably made a slave, so a man who always makes mistakes will never rise.

This is one of those sayings whose sense is somewhat uncertain.

346 En mutum ya yi maka rana, ka yi masa derri.

Return good for evil.

347 Mutum ba shi tubé minny riga a kasua, saanan ya komo gidida ya che za ya sa minny.

A man will not publicly insult me and then apologize privately.

348 Ana magana'n kaia'n kai, ba a magana na rātaya.

We are talking of the head load, not of the one slung over the shoulder.

Don't shove your oar in, you are much too small a man.

The load carried on the head is a heavy one, one merely slung would be something small, done up in a bag or handkerchief.

349 Fure tagari ba shi da dadi'n kamshi koyaushi.

A good fire is not always sweet smelling.

350 Mai ido daia ba ya godé Allah ba, sai ya ga makafo.

The one-eyed man only thanks Allah for his one eye when he sees a totally blind man.

You never know when you are well off.

- 351 Jaga rabbo'n duffu, mai kaza ya tasshi da kai.

Sharing in the dark is not a good thing, the owner of the fowl (shared) may come off with the head.

Anajuga masa da yawa, he has had much more than his share.

- 352 Kowa na Allah ne, amma dammu na maigona ne.

Every one belongs to Allah, but the *dammu* belongs to the owner of the farm.

That at any rate is mine.
Dammu, a lizard.

- 353 Arziki ba riga ba ne, bale a tubé.

Good luck is not like a coat which you can take off and on.

- 354 Zuma da zaki (زافي) da harbi.

The bee has both sweetness and a sting (zuma, honey, a bee).

There are two sides to every question.

- 355 Dukia māgani'n kankantchi.

Wealth is the cure for punishment.

- 356 Baréwa ta yi gudu, danta shi réreffí.

When the *barewa* runs shall its young one crawl.

When my master goes out shall I stay at home.
Barewa, the gazelle, the Senegal antelope.

- 357 Kura na sha'n rua, karre ya léka.

The dog looks on while the kura drinks.

Na, *vide* 8.

- 358 Litafi'n makariachi, shi ka yi karatu'n abinshi rana'n taro.

The record of the liar, you read it the day you meet.

359 Dasshé ya fi sirréri (or shukakyé).

Planting out or transplanting is better than sowing seeds.

360 Dan maigona ya fi dan mai gaiya.

The son of a man who owns a farm is better than the son of the man who has only got a piece of ground which he intends to *gaiya*.

Gaiya, to collect a number of men together to hoe your farm; a feast is usually prepared for them.

361 Mai koda ba ta so mai koda.

Maikoda, maikodia, a woman who pounds corn.

Rivals do not agree.

362 Dadi'n magana ka jira shi tarshéka.

One does not seek to avoid pleasant talk.

363 Wa ya ki faddua'n rumbu, mata'n gidida ko kaji?

Do the women of the house or the hens object to the falling down of the *rumbu*?

Rumbu, the earthen receptacle for corn, usually with a grass roof.

They don't object, because it gives both less trouble to get the corn. *Vide* 129.

364 Mai kaia ke tsoro'n fushi, dan alaaro sai anbashì magana.

The owner of the load fears robbers (he acts with caution for fear of losing his property), the carrier does not care (all you can do is to warn him).

- 365 *Rena kiwo makwaidäitchi, ko ya yi keau,
ya chinye abinshi.*

Do not take any account of what the "sponger" has, even if it is good he eats up his all.

Makwadäi, a man who lives on his neighbours, not necessarily a beggar.

- 366 *Mainama shi kan nema wutta.*

The man with meat seeks fire.

- 367 *Ta fi chikka kasua'n munafukai.*

The market of evildoers is always fullest.

- 368 *Resshi'n tuo kan chi waké akona.*

"Lack of *tuo*" has to eat burnt beans.

Make the best of a thing.

Waké, beans, the food of the poorest people.

- 369 *Wonda ya dauki birri, sandanshi ba ya
makki abissa ba.*

The stick of the monkey man will not be hidden in the tree long (for the monkey will bring it down for him).

- 370 *Tsuguni ba kārī ba, anseyer da karre,
anseye birri.*

The matter is not to be settled in that way.

The dog and the monkey both squat, so that it is no good selling your dog and buying a monkey because you are tired of an animal that squats.

- 371 *Waké daia bata gāri.*

One bean will spoil the flour.

- 372 *Ka fei banna, kamman gata'n birri.*

You are as destructive (mischievous) as a baboon.

373 Toosa ya kari a wuri'n bu derri.

There's an end of that. He won't do any more harm.

Bu derri, a strong-smelling animal, a wild cat or a kind of tortoise.

374 Gulbi ba ya chi ni ba, koramma ba ya chi na.

The river has not been too much for me, its bed won't be.

375 Gajiawa'n kurege a baki'n rami.

To fail at the last minute, like a *kurege* which has reached the mouth of its hole and is too tired to enter.

376 Wasa'n kurege a baki'n raminshi.

The playing of a jerboa at the mouth of its hole (where it is safe).

Like a man who defies his enemies from a safe distance.

377 Kasshi a chikkin turmi, ba na wada'n karre ne ba.

A dwarf dog cannot leave its excrement inside a turmi.

Turmi, the mortar of wood in which corn is pounded. Some one else must have done this, it is not like his work.

378 Kyéta'n gwéwa shi kan kasshi ubangij-jinsa.

To jeer at or neglect *gwéwa* kills the master.

Almost our "A stitch in time saves nine." *Vide* 60.

379 Kaia na chi, gammu na chi.

The load troubles you (for it is heavy), but don't let the *gammu* do so (for it is light).
Vide 6.

- 380 Talaala mai kamman sekk-yé, nesa mai kamman kussa.

Talaala is like being loose, as if a far away thing were close.

To an animal to be tied with a long string, which it does not notice, is like being untied.

Ya yi masu talaala, he watches them unawares.

- 381 Maduki kussa, macheto nesa.

The striker near, the refuge far.

- 382 Abin duk da kaza achikkin chi'n danko.

It is all the same to a hen what rubber it eats (for it does not eat rubber at all).

It is all the same to me.

- 383 Bakkai'n gizzu, shi ba Allah ba, shi ya hanna Allah rua.

The spider's web is not Allah, but it prevents the rain falling.

The heavy black clouds that hang about before a tornado are supposed to be like a spider's web and to prevent rain from falling.

- 384 Taffia'n itachi'n kaddangari.

Good intentions.

The lizard, when it feels cold at night, says to itself "to-morrow I will find a smouldering tree to sleep in so that I shall be warm." Next day when it basks in the sun it forgets and does not do it; the consequence is that it feels cold again next night.

- 385 Mahasadda kuna zatto'n fari, Allah ya sakko da rua.

O slanderers, you think a thing is white (withered), but Allah will freshen it with water.

Slanderers do a man great harm by their slander, but Allah will put it right.

386 Kirra da hannu magani'n wonda ya yi nesa.

Calling with the hand is the remedy for one who is a long way off.

387 Da terbacha giwa ta fi dengi.

By reason of collecting all round the elephant is the biggest beast.

If everyone gives a little to make up one thing it will become biggest of all.

388 Ya samu laamuni ga Dodo, shigga rua ba woni abu ne ba.

He has a safe conduct from Dodo (the devil), if he enters water no harm will come to him.

The devil looks after his own.

389 So'n rakumi'n yara dagga nesa, en ya zo kussa sai su gudu.

Children love the camel when it is afar off, when it approaches they run away.

Don't be in a hurry to choose, be sure you want it.

390 Muna shiri'n ganni k̄ariwa'n booshia da fari'n wata.

We are getting ready to see the catching of the hedgehog in the moonlight.

We are expecting a day of reckoning or exposure for him.

The hedgehog moves at night; it requires moonlight to see it.

391 Miskin, mai shigga rijia ya je da dāwu.

A lucky man is like a man who having fura
(which is dry) enters or comes on a well
(which has water).

392 Kurum bakka, amaria ta hadié kasshe.

Silence, indeed, as a bride who has swallowed a bone on her wedding-day.

393 Daji ba k̄ari chi'n wutta ba, fara ba ta yi ma yar uwatata berka.

While the bush is still burning the locust does not congratulate its friend.

Do not cry out till you are out of the wood.

394 Chan gasso gadda, zomo ya ji kiddi'n farauta.

There where the *gadda* is the hare hears the sound of the beating of drums.

Antelope are driven by a large crowd of shouting people who beat drums, &c.

At any rate the hare is warned in time. It is an ill wind that blows no one any good.

Gadda, the duiker.

395 Koenna funtu zashi, da sanni'n mairiga.

Wherever the naked man goes, the man with a coat knows where he is.

A naked man is always conspicuous.

396 Kadda mu yi sara'n itchi da mutum bissa.

Don't let us talk of him, there he is.

397 Ido ba ma gani ba, sai hankali ke gani.

It is not the eye that understands, but the mind.

398 Idan rua ya sha kai, shakirra muburmi.

If water is up to your head the buttocks are like a *muburmi* in a *masekki*.

To plunge deeper into the mire.

Muburmi, the small calabash used to bale water out of a larger one. It would usually be at the bottom.

Shakirra, the buttocks.

399 Kwadaï ka kasshe'n karre, ba yungwa ba.

It is not hunger that kills the dog but continually hanging round for food; for people get angry and throw stones at it.

400 Da kurru gadda ta yi sunna.

The *gadda* has a reputation for courage, or on account of its small size.

Gadda, a very small antelope, duiker. *Vide* 394.

401 Koyanzu kasua ta tasshi, angulu ta sha jinni.

As soon as the market breaks up the vulture begins to drink blood.

402 Saba da maifito, tun kwoginshi ba kawo rua ba, randa rua ya bayenna kai ne fito'n farko.

Familiarity with a boatman, before his river fills with water, causes you to be the first to benefit by his boat when the water appears.

Maifito, a boatman, one who puts you out.

403 Saba da kwana'n rami, ko mutua ya sameka.

A man who is accustomed to hardship will not mind a little extra.

404 Kowa ta kai, gobarra yan bera.

Every one for himself.

405 Shi ke nan birni, en ji ba kowyé.

O see the city, so says the rustic!

Kowyé the small hamlets within a radius of ten miles or so from a walled town; in a larger sense, sometimes for all towns depending on the "birni."

- 406 Da angansu, sai anche "kworria akarabba."
On seeing them one would say, "A calabash cut
in half."

As like as two peas.

- 407 Kaddangari ka shigga rua ka zamma kadda.
O, lizard, if you enter the water you will become
a crocodile.

As if one said to a man, "Yes, go on, you can do it,"
knowing well that he cannot. To egg him on.

- 408 Wonda a rua ba ya san tuddu anarana ba.
He who is at his ease does not know what it is to
be in want.

- 409 Tulu ne, ya ke ka kawo, randa tana dakika.
The *tulu* you carry to and fro, the *randa* remains
in the house.

The owner of the house is always there, he does not
do the fetching and carrying. *Vide* 12.

- 410 Maigado ya so kwana mai taberma naddé.
The owner of the bed wants to sleep, and the
owner of the mat (who has spread it on the
bed) must pack up.

- 411 Kwana bukka ya fi kwana soro (da ba
kurdi).

To sleep in the grass shelter of the trader (and
have plenty of food) is better than to sleep
in a *soro* without any.

Soro, the flat-roofed mud hut, the best kind known
in the Central Soudan.

- 412 Akwoi mai-abuta uku zamma'n dunia, da
zuchia, da hankali, da leura.

There are three things worth having in this world,
courage, good sense, and caution.

413 Enna rua'n gusu da taba.

They are two entirely different things.

414 Muna da nia (neea) maje samma ya hau giginia.

We are full of zeal, the goer to the sky climbs a palm tree (deleb).

Much promise, little result.

415 Ido'n da ya ga hayaki shi kan debo wutta.

The eye that sees smoke looks for fire.

416 Zamani'n da doki da jaki ba su mutu ba, mi maikia ta chi ta yi rai.

What is the vulture to eat if horses and donkeys don't die.

It is an ill wind that blows no one any good.

417 Wawa ba mahaukachi ba ne, en ya chi kasua giddansa sai ya komo.

The simpleton is not absolutely devoid of sense, if he visits the market he will return home.

418 Da bagarua da abin gari ne, da ba aber na majéma ba.

Had the *bagarua* been of any other use it would not have been left to the tanner.

Bagarua, acacia tree, its wood is very hard and is used for the handles of axes, &c., the bark for tanning. *Majéma*, masu gyetta fata, tanners.

419 Sabta'n tsoola, ka debi fusari ka wanka kasshi.

To rob Peter to pay Paul.

420 Hallali'n gunda itachi'n gao.

The proper food for the *gunda* is the wood of the *gao* tree.

Gunda, the insect that bores holes in wood.

421 Kufa'n mai ta fi na rua.

A grease stain is more lasting than one of water.

422 Makafo ba ya san anaganninsa ba, sai ansa sanda anzungeréshi.

A blind man does not know that he is being looked at until one takes a stick and pokes him.

423 Inda rua, garra ya yi ginna, in ba rua ba, garra ya yi ginni.

The *garra* (white ant) builds with or without water.

424 Karriya ne, kunne ba shi finn kai.

It is a lie, the ears are not bigger than the head.

The servant is not a bigger man than his master.

425 Aki maraya da riga'n buzu, a ganshi da na karifi.

You refuse the orphan a leather *riga* (or you object to him with a leather *riga* on), you meet him with one of iron.

426 Kadda ayi "ba'n rua albassa," a deeba akassa, a zubass akassa.

Don't do "giving an onion water;" it is taken from the ground and poured out on the ground.

Don't do that kind of thing, there is no end to it.

427 Masiachi, ko ansakkashi achikkin tandu'n mai, sai shi fito busasshi.

A poor (unsuccessful) man, if he was put into a pot of grease he would come out dry.

If a man is fated to be poor, nothing will enrich him.

428 Bükki'n kulla, aska ta bata a wuri'n maikora.

"Looking feast" is like spoiling a razor on a bald head.

It is a waste of time.

429 Malakka'n karre da hanta'n kura.

The kura's liver and the property of a dog !

A thing he is not likely to have.

430 Sai ansha wuya akantunna Allah.

When in trouble one remembers Allah.

431 Mai habetchi maso fadda, wonda ya tanka ko ya fishi.

The man who is full of trite sayings rejoices in a discussion ; it is not impossible that the man who answers may silence him.

The following twenty-two sentences, which define the peculiarities of certain things and animals, are often used when they are considered to the point as :—

11 Meaning he may be ugly and stupid, but he does us no harm.

15 What a chatterbox.

16 He would not come here without a reason.

An officer well known in North Nigeria was commonly spoken of among the soldiers in a similar way: *Kwado, kwado ba ka chi'n woni.*

- 1 Dila maishenchia, maiwayo, sha rua da na gobé.

The *dila* with a bushy tail is a wily animal, he drinks to-morrow's water as well as to-day's.

- 2 Kaza, bata wuri'n kwananki.

O hen, you foul your own nest.

- 3 Yawa'n daria kamma'n gona'n abduga.

A great deal of laughter is like a cotton field (for the white teeth show).

- 4 Rangamma kina da kamma'n anseyes a koma talha.

O, *rangamma*, you are like "sold and cried for sale again."

Rangamma, to barter, to get goods in exchange, not money.

Talha, to cry anything for sale in the market.

- 5 Giwa'n bassa, ko mutum ya massu, ba ya seyer da shi ya seye fura.

Giwa'n bassa, a large hamper of butter (shea); it is very carefully closed, and a carrier would not think of opening it to buy himself food with, even if he were hungry.

- 6 Tolo-tolo ka fi yanka'n baki (باقى).

O, turkey, you are too good (expensive) to kill for a stranger to eat.

- 7 Dammu sariki'n hankuri, kurrum ya gum-shéka da kowa, wanda ya che "ka che" shi ya che.

The *dammu* is the prince of patience, he tries to please every one, if any one says, "speak," he speaks.

- 8 Tsari mai ba haushi akoreka ka fada rua.

O *tsari*, you give disappointment, when you are chased you drop into the water.

Tsari, said to be a small alligator.

- 9 Iska ba ki da nowyi, kina kāda mainya mainyan itachi.

O wind you have no weight, but you cut down the biggest trees.

- 10 Kitsé mugu'n nama, ba ka nuna ba, ka kasshe wutta.

O fat, you are an evil kind of meat, you do not get cooked and you put out the fire.

- 11 Enna laifi'n angulu, kaza'n birni, wonda ba ta tona shuka.

Why do people find fault with the vulture; it is a town bird, it does not eat seeds (that have been sown).

- 12 Idan ka ji zuma yana kugi, ya yi rua ne, shina nema'n maichinsa.

When you hear the bee buzzing, you know it is making honey and wants some one to take it.

- 13 Laya'n karra da keau, ba māgani.

Laya (charms) made of guinea corn stalk sewn in leather are nice to look at, but they are not real "juju."

- 14 Hansekkye'n darma, ka kai ba ka kawo ba.
O pincers made of lead, you can bring up iron to the fire but cannot carry it away again.
- 15 Sooda maiyawa'n labari fadi ba a tambayeka ba.
O *sooda*, you are full of noise, though no one asks you to make it.
Sooda, a small bird which makes a great twittering.
- 16 Maikia ba ki sauka'n banza, sai maidalili.
O vulture, you do not settle on the ground without a reason.
- 17 Belbela chi da motsi'n woni.
O *belbela*, you live by the movements of others.
Belbela, the paddy bird of India; it is always seen near cattle, &c., and feeds off the ticks.
- 18 Gona'n tofa kéwoya dagga nesa.
Go a long way round to avoid the fields where *tofa* is growing.
Tofa, a grass which leaves prickles in the feet.
- 19 Karre'n ramma ba ruanka da kanzo.
O dog, made of tie-tie, you have no concern with *kanzo*.
Ramma, a straight bush; tie-tie is made out of its bark.
Tie-tie, the native English for string made out of bark.
Karre'n ramma, a basket made out of this tie-tie filled with rubbish, which children play with, supposed to be a dog.
Kanzo, the dry remains of yesterday's tuo, usually thrown to hens or dogs.

20 Hankaka maida dan woni shi zamma naka.

O *hankaka*, make some one else's child become yours.

The *hankaka*, or crow, is supposed not to have young of its own but to appropriate those of other birds.

21 Gaiwa chi jikkinki.

O *gaiwa*, eat your own body.

Gaiwa, the mud fish, found under the mud after water has fallen below its usual level; it is, during the dry weather, supposed to live on the secretions of its own body.

22 Faran tunfafia ba achinki, ba ka chin woni.

O locust of the *tunfafia* tree, you are not eaten, you do no one any harm.

RIDDLES.

- 1 Rigata biu, wonda ni ke sawa shi ne sabua,
wonda ba ni sawa ita che tsofua.

I have two coats, the one which I always wear is
new, and the one I don't wear is old.

Answer.—A road.

- 2 Rigata guda daia, aljifunta deri.

I have a coat with a hundred pockets.

Answer.—An anthill.

- 3 Godiata da chikki ba na hawa'n doki, sai
chikki ni ke hau.

When my mare is in foal I don't ride her, but I
ride the unborn foal.

Answer.—A house with a bed inside.

- 4 Shanunsa deri, madaurinsa daia.

Answer.—A broom, which has a hundred pieces of grass,
but only one string to tie them with.

- 5 Babba na chikki gemansa na waje.

The master of the house is inside but his beard is
outside.

Answer.—A hut with a fire inside and the smoke
coming out of the roof. *Vide* 8 na.

- 6 Dan karami'n abu gamma dunia.

A very small thing, but the world is not complete
without it.

Answer.—The moon.

- 7 Afallalu kan dabobi, dukia mai kamma'n
Iblis, kowa ya sekkyéka ya nemoka.

Largest of beasts, devilish property, every one
who loses you has to look for you.

Answer.—A camel.

- 8 Fura'n uri, dama kwogi.

A cowrie's worth of fura which whitens the pool or
stream.

Answer.—The moon.

- 9 Akoshi'n babba faskarra sudéwa.

The basin of a great man which cannot be emptied.

Answer.—The kuddu'n düffi, the pits from which earth
has been dug to build walls, they fill with water
during the rains.

Soodi or suddi, the remains of a dish; you may keep
on baling out "kuddu'n düffi," but will never
empty them.

- 10 Rawani'n babba faskarra naddawa.

The chief's headdress defies rolling up.

Rawani, the strip of cloth wrapped round the face and
head—Puggari.

Answer.—A road.

- 11 Na wanka kworriata, na je da ita gabbass,
na je da ita yamma, na dawo, ba ta
booshe ba.

I clean my calabash, I go east with it, I go west
with it, still it won't dry.

Answer.—A dog's tongue.

- 12 Uku, uku ta gamma gari.

Three, three complete the town; no town is
complete without them.

Answer.—The three stones or lumps of earth on which
pots are put to stand when cooking.

1907 Rattray Chinyanja .pdf

SOME FOLK-LORE STORIES AND SONGS

IN CHINYANJA

WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND NOTES

BY

R. SUTHERLAND RATTRAY

MEMBER OF THE AFRICAN LAKES CORPORATION, LTD.,
BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA

WITH PREFACE BY

THE REV. ALEXANDER HETHERWICK, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "A PRACTICAL MANUAL OF THE NYANJA LANGUAGE," ETC.

LONDON.

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.

1907

XXV

MWAMBI (NTANU)

I. TIYENI tikachite mwambi lero, ndipo antu onse asonkana, nyumba tho! Nayamba m'modzi kuna kuti, "Chakuti chakuti¹ n'chiani?" Ndipo anzache akalepera² iye ati, "Baireni"³. Ndipo ambaira kuti, "Kadie⁴ za kwa uje." Ndipo iye ali nazo gwa! nyama twē! nadia idia⁵, nati, "Chimenecho n'chakuti."

Kantu kopanda nkwaso n'chiani?
Mubvi.

Kantu kosamangika'i n'chiani?
Mpepo (kapena *madzi*, kapena *utsi*).

Kantu konunkiza, ungabisitse kako kakalondola⁶,
n'chiani?
Nchenche.

Kantu koota moto n'kumbuyo?
Tsanja.

Antu nonse nkondo inichimwa⁷, kantu kamodzi koputaputa, kakaiponya⁸, n'chiani?
Mtiko.

Muntu akaponya mubvi wache kumwamba, ndipo pobwera ubwera wopanda bango, n'chiani?
Inswa. (Chifukwa pouluka ziuluka ndi mapiko, zigwa zopanda mapiko.)

Kantu kosanyamulika'i?
Chitunzitunzi.

Mtengo womera pa mtengo unzache n'chiani?
*Ulimbo*⁹.

Kweru tsiku, kweru tsiku n'chiani?

Munsi.

Nyumba yapsya, watsala mtanda woka?

Njira (Chifukwa tengo likapsya itsala njira yoka,
iri tanta).

Ndamanga nyumba ndi mzati umodzi, n'chiani?

Boa.

Antu awiri asenza chintu chachikulu n'chiani?

Mitanda iwiri isenza nkokwe.

Diwa lagwa kawiri kawiri lero loka loka n'chiani?

Chikope.

Chintu cholakwa antu onse, asenza muntu mmo-
dzi.

Madzi.

Kantu kofuma kutari, kutifeza ife pano.

Mvula.

Muntu alima minda yambiri lero lomwe osatopa'i
n'chiani?

Wometa.

Kantu kolondola koka, sikaphonya'i ¹⁰, kungakale
mdima, n'chiani?

Dzanja (Chifukwa siwala pa kamwa).

Mpini ¹¹ umodzi, nsompo kumi.

Ntochi.

Nyumba yopanda komo.

Dzira.

Kantu kosaoneka komwe kadagwera.

Tambo.

Kantu kokalemekeza, kolira kukagwira ndi manja
awiri.

Ntedza.

Nkalamba imweta udzu n'kumimba ni folera
n'kumsana, n'chiani?

Chipande.

Mtengo adula lero, m'mawa mwache uyamba ku-
puka.

Tsitsi.

Kungatarikitsa, lero lomwe ukafika, n'chiani?

Mtima.

Pita uku, nanenso, ndipite uko, tikomane.

Mkuzi.

Chinyama chofa m'malimwe, pfungo lache limve
ka kuno ¹², n'chiani?

Mvula.

Nyama zipezana pa madzi.

Antu.

Mfumu idatumiza muntu ¹³ kuti akatenge mbuzi,
ndi chimanga, ndi kambuku, ndipo pofika pa nyanja,
anapeza bwato bwabwang'ono. Ndipo anati, "Ndi-
yambe chiani? ndikayamba kambuku, mbuzi idzadia
chimanga, ndikayamba chimanga, kambuku adia
mbuzi, koma ndiyambe mbuzi." Natenga mbuzi,
naolotsa, ndipo anasinkanso kuti, "Ine ndikatenga
chimanga mbuzi ikadia ndikatenga kambuku mbuzi
ikadiedwa." Nanga muntu uja adatani?

*Poyamba analowetsa mbuzi, inka patsidia, na-
bwerera natenga kambuku, natenganso mbuzi na-
bwezera m'bwato, akasia patsidia pomwe, natenga
chimanga, nabweranso, nakatenga mbuzi.*

Madzi akatayika saola.

Kwagwa mtengo sikuzimira'i.

Kako n'komwe wadieratu, mukapanda kudia
n'kamwini.

Dote, sin'kadakudia, ndikudiera ku uchi.
 Liwiro la m'mchenga, mumayambira pamodzi.
 Chaona mzako chapita mawa chiona iwe.
 Mwalemera nyanga yanga, sumandidia'i ¹⁴.

 XXVI

CHAMBA CHA KANONOMERA

MUNTU akadwala ¹, akaombeza ula ² ndipo wa ula ati, "Pali mzimu wa gogo ³ wache ulikufuna chamba ⁴, mukabvina chamba'cho mundionere ⁵ mwana alikukala tsonga." Apita ku mudzi natenga nsengwa ya dzintu, nanena nazo kwa mzimu kuti, "Nao maere ⁶ amene mulikupera ⁷ muntu tikapika moa tiwone ⁸ muntu alikukala tsonga." Ndipo amema ⁹ antu onse, tsiku losuza ¹⁰ ndipo antu asonkana, madzulo ache ¹¹ nalowa m'nyumba, nayamba kuomba m'manja kudzutsa ¹² mzimu, ndipo aona muntu wodwala'yo alikuntuntumira ndi kulira ¹³, ndipo antu ati, "Musadza ndi nkhondo, taniitana ndife, taonani pam'dzi pano padza ng'oma koma zichoke bwino, musazichititsa ntenya" ¹⁴. Akata kuombera m'manja, chamba chituruka panja, nayamba kuimba ng'oma, alikubvina. Wakumbuka nyimbo, naimba, muntu amene agwidwa ndi nzimu, agwa, namchotsa kunja, nayamba kumbveka nsaru ndi zikopa za nyama, nalowanso, nayamba kubvina. Muntu akagwidwa ndi mzimu wa mwana, ayamba kummangitsa nsaru yache, kuti ilimbe, chifukwa muntu'yo alikufuna kuti abvule nsaru yache kuti adzibvina mali-seche, chifukwa mwana wa kanda sakabvala'i. Mka-

XXV

SOME RIDDLES AND PROVERBS

I. "COME, let us give riddles to-day," some one says, and then every one collects, and the hut is packed. One begins to say, "Such and such a thing, what is it?" And should his companions give up, then (the one who gave the riddle) says, "Then kill me so and so's cattle." And they do so (in pretence), saying, "Go and eat what's his name's." And he has them stabbed, the meat is all over the place, and eats and eats, and says, "The answer is so and so."

SOME RIDDLES

Q. Something without a spoor; what is that?

A. An arrow.

Q. Something that cannot be bound.

A. The winds. (Perhaps water, or smoke.)

Q. Something with a very keen scent; for even if you hide away some little thing you have, it goes and finds it out. What is that?

A. A fly.

Q. Something which warms itself with its back to the fire.

A. The shelf above the fire, in a hut.

Q. A war which baffles all of you; there is one little thing, spoiling for a fight, that goes and tackles it. What is that?

A. The porridge stick.

Q. A person shoots his arrow up in the air, and when it returns, it does so without its shaft.

A. Winged white ant. (Because when it flies off it has wings, but falls without its wings.)

Q. A little thing, yet that cannot be lifted.

A. A shadow.

Q. A tree which grows out of a companion tree.

A. The *ulimbo* tree.

Q. Up down, up down. What is that?

A. A pestle (for pounding grain).

Q. The house has been burned, and there remains only the cross-beam.

A. A path. (Because when the bush is burned the road-way is there stretching away.)

Q. I built a hut with only one post to prop up the roof. What is that?

A. A mushroom.

Q. Two people support a huge thing. What is that?

A. The two pair of supports of a grain store.

Q. The stone trap has fallen over and over again to-day alone. What is that?

A. The eyelid.

Q. Something which no number of people can lift, yet there is one person who can do so.

A. Water.

Q. Something which comes from far away, and finds us here.

A. The rain.

Q. A man who hoes many gardens in one day without being tired.

A. A barber.

Q. Something which finds the way by itself; it does not go wide of the mark even though it is dark.

A. The hand. (Because it does not forget the mouth.)

Q. One axe handle, but ten axe heads.

A. A bunch of bananas.

Q. A hut without a doorway.

A. An egg.

Q. Something you cannot tell whence it fell from.

A. A cloud.

Q. A little thing of such importance that, when you wish it, you go and take it with both hands.

A. A ground nut.

Q. An old fellow who cuts the grass with his belly, and smoothes it down with his back.

A. A spoon (used for dishing out the porridge).

Q. A tree which you cut down to-day, and the next it begins to sprout.

A. Hair.

Q. However far away it be, this very day this thing reaches there.

A. Memories.

Q. You go in this direction, I go in that, and we must meet.

A. A belt.

Q. Some great beast which dies in the dry season, and the scent of which reaches us here.

A. The first of the rains.

Q. The animals meet each other at the water (where they all come to drink).

A. Men and women. (When there is a common place for drawing water, where those from different villages get their supply.)

Q. A chief sent a person to bring a goat, and some maize, and a leopard, and when he came to the river, he found only a small boat, and he said, "What must I begin with? Should I begin with the leopard, the goat will eat the maize, and if I

begin with the maize, the leopard will eat the goat, but I must begin with the goat." So he takes the goat and ferries it over, and again he began to think, saying, "Now, if I take the maize over, the goat will eat it, and should I take the leopard the goat will be eaten." Well, what did the man do?

A. First of all he ferried over the goat, it goes across, and he returns and takes the leopard, and also takes the goat back in the boat to the other side there, and leaves it there, taking over the maize, and comes back once more for the goat.

SOME PROVERBS

If water gets spilt, they do not gather it up.

Where a tree has fallen, you cannot hide the fall thereof.

That little you have is what you have eaten up beforehand; if you do not eat it up, it is some one else's. (*i.e.* "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die.")

O earth, I should not have eaten you (for yourself); I am only eating you because you are mixed up along with the honey.

You all start on an equality when it is a question of racing in the sand.

What has seen your friend to-day has gone off, to-morrow it will pay you a visit. (*i.e.* Do not laugh at a companion in trouble; your turn may come next.)

You gain wealth from my tusks, and yet you do not eat my flesh.

1909 Camphor Liberia.pdf

Missionary Story Sketches Folk-Lore from Africa

By

ALEXANDER PRIESTLEY CAMPHOR

//

With an

INTRODUCTION

BY

THE REV. M. C. B. MASON

*"Let light break into the wilderness beyond
you, so dense and dark with sin, and the
money will come. For years the cry has
come to us to put out from the shore."*

The Black Heritage Library Collection



BOOKS FOR LIBRARIES PRESS

FREEPORT, NEW YORK

1971

FOLK-LORE FROM AFRICA

NATIVE PARABLES

If a man calls you and you refuse to answer, you will be driven to reply if he persists in calling you.

Meaning: Perseverance conquers difficulty.

Smoked meat is sweet; but what will you have to eat in the meanwhile, before the meat is thus prepared?

Meaning: A bird in the hand is better than a thousand in the bushes.

Might and strength simply can not produce wealth.

Meaning: Prosperity is heaven's gift.

Drain you the crab-hole ever so dry, there will be drops of water found in it still.

Meaning: Be a man ever so poor, still he has some property or other to boast of, something to call his own.

In the absence of the leopard the dog trespasses in its den or cave.

Meaning: Your bitterest or weakest foe will take advantage of your absence.

If a man live long enough, he shall have eaten as much as a whole elephant.

Meaning: Long life furnishes a chance to achieve great things.

MISSIONARY STORY SKETCHES

The rain that falls on the master can fall on his slave too.

Meaning: Trouble is no respecter of persons.

If the rat that walks about in the day fall into a trap, how more liable to be caught are those who walk about in the night?

Meaning: If they do these things in a green tree, what will be done in the dry?

If raindrops fail to fill the bucket, dewdrops can not fill it.

Meaning: If those who are in every way qualified to perform an office fail to execute it, it is highly presumptive in others who possess fewer of such qualifications to dream of their ability to accomplish the task.

It was the sudden fall of rain that obliged goats and sheep to rush together in one place.

Meaning: "What can't be cured must be endured."

Cockroaches have no protection of their lives in a country inhabited by fowls.

Meaning: When in the enemy's land, never reckon you are safe.

After you get to the large cotton tree you see yonder you now admire, you will not think too much more of it.

Meaning: "Satiety follows after full possession."

FOLK-LORE FROM AFRICA

If you engage a bad woman in a public dancing-room to be your wife, you both are in danger of separation when you attend some other dance subsequently.

Meaning: If you marry a divorced woman, take care you don't have to divorce her too.

If you say you will save one from any trouble, do it entirely.

Meaning: If you will save one from any distress, do it effectually, and do not afterward become antagonistic to him by sinking him into it the deeper.

If you are drowning in the sea, drink enough of its water at once.

Meaning: If you can't possibly remedy any danger to you, succumb by selling your life dearly.

"Jookoo" brings "Jakkah."

Meaning: Tit for tat; evil be to him who evil thinks.

A polygamist must have plenty of common sense to cope with the members of his harem.

Meaning: One who has taken many responsibilities upon himself must have sufficient tact and means to square up with them.

MISSIONARY STORY SKETCHES

You are not the alligator's brother after all your best swimming in the water by its side.

Meaning: A foreigner is but a foreigner, say what you please, do what you may.

The small elephant has large tusks.

Meaning: Great events hang on small things.

The frog thought there was no other sort of water in the world but the cold and comfortable kind in which he was reared; but circumstances brought it about one day so that he tumbled into boiling water. All frogs learned then a lesson from this sad but well-bought experience of their unfortunate companion; hence their significant screeching noise near ponds and swamps at night, saying, "Water is more than one kind." Response, "More than one; more than one."

Meaning: The wealthy heir thinks there is nothing but happiness and prosperity in life; but when suddenly overtaken by adversity he and his friends are taught the useful lesson that life is checkered.

One finger does not pick out the vermin in your head.

Meaning: "Two are better than one."

If money brings love into the house, it will carry it back when it returns.

Meaning: If we love for the sake of wealth, we shall hate when poverty comes.

FOLK-LORE FROM AFRICA

SOME AFRICAN (LIBERIAN) PROVERBS

The leopard says: If a thing is running, it is food.

The G'de (monkey) says: It must be knowledge, it is not large. (Knowledge is better than size.)

The Gbubudugba (plant) says: If I have no sower I sow myself.

The squirrel says: For wisdom's sake two people walk (together).

The red ant says: If you are (nearly) consumed, you enter into one nest (in peace).

The bush rat says: If you rest, you eat your tail (from want).

Stopping (hindering) another, thou stoppest thyself.

The foot that walks the road, that one a thorn strikes.

I have a vessel already; then why should I search for one to put things in?

The ox says: Given leaves do not satisfy.

Before you can make soup you must have the meat.

Whatever, a snake appearing, is at hand, with that he kills it.

If you want to catch fish, don't shake the water.

A strange cock does not crow.

MISSIONARY STORY SKETCHES

Money is a gentleman's slave.

When the elephant died as a visitor, he made but one load (because of his leanness).

If thou alone are left in the world, thou art to be pitied.

The hen says: We walk after him that has something.

Where the head is not, there is the back (also poverty).

Pull the child out of the water before you punish it.

If nothing troubles you, you are unborn.

The snail says: I should tell it, but I have no foot for running. (It is not safe to tell a secret if you can not run away.)

The hand-thing is sweet (*i. e.*, a thing gained by work).

The guinea pig says: One does not cross the water talking.

One does not esteem suppositions.

The guinea fowl says: One does not risk life for show.

The gazelle says: Wisdom is life.

The big monkey says: Word does not prevent word.

"Softly, softly," killed the monkey.

One palm spoils all the wine (if it is bad).

The crab says: If you meet others in the mud,

FOLK-LORE FROM AFRICA

then go into mud (for there must be some danger near).

The red ant says: The world is large, yet you hear no noise.

The crocodile says: The water is very long (far), but the canoe lands (at last).

"I only may eat, another must eat"—this carried the hedgehog to the bush (*i. e.*, he was driven out).

The "rained on" musk deer says: If you leave your place you do not find a (dry) place.

The wild goat says: Morning food is blood. (Early hours make one prosper.)

The lizard says: If you have nothing, you make a hunchback (*i. e.*, you walk dejectedly).

The small ant says: Nothing beats a crowd.

A snake curled up eats nothing.

The devil-fish (very ugly) says: Men's faces are unlike.

The monkey ate with two hands, and fell from the tree.

The fox says: The pit of safety is not deep.

The stork says: Nothing hurts a child of light.

The (big-headed) fish says: Your head must grow before you ascend the river (*i. e.*, you need sense before you travel).

The crocodile says: One does not carry the bowels to market.

Broken things last long.

1909 Hollis Nandi.pdf

THE NANDI

THEIR LANGUAGE AND FOLK-LORE

BY

A. C. HOLLIS

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

SIR CHARLES ELIOT

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1909

ATINDONIK-AP-NANDI

NANDI PROVERBS

No. 1. Chii ne-ki-kw-am-e soet ko-'ngo-'ro tany
 Man who-is-eaten-by the-buffalo and-if-he-sees ox
 dui ko-'le ka-it.
 black and-he-says it-has-arrived.

If a man has been once tossed by a buffalo he thinks when he sees a black ox coming towards him that it is another buffalo.

['Once bit, twice shy.']

No. 2. Ii-e ñgetũny lel.
 He-bears lion hyena.

The lion bears a hyena.

[Said when a son is unworthy of his father.]

No. 3. I-much-i-ke cheposta ; 'ngo-iam-in
 Try-thyself the-arm-clamp ; if-it-suits-thee
 in-de-ke, 'ngo-ma-iam-in i-met-te.
 and-thou-wearest-it, if-it-not-suits-thee and-thou-throwest-it-away.

Try this arm clamp ; if it fits you, wear it, if it does not fit you, throw it away.

[Don't wear an ornament if it inconveniences you, and don't do anything for show unless you derive some benefit from your action.]

No. 4. Inga-i ñgom, i-ker-i-ke kimut-i ?
 (Even)-if-thou-art clever, dost-thou-see-thyself nape-of-the-neck ?

However clever you may be, can you see the back of your neck ?

[Said to a boaster.]

No. 5. Inge-ñgor-a ke-ñgor Kipkeny.
 If-I-am-divined and-he-is-divined Kipkeny.

[Kipkeny is the name of a well-known wizard who was never found out. This saying is much used by a person who boasts of having done wrong and is equivalent to: 'They might as well expect to catch Kipkeny as me.']

No. 6. Iñgét-i kimereñg minde.
 It-causes-to-arise blue-duiker red-duiker.

The small gazelle (blue duiker) causes the big gazelle (red duiker) to get up.

[The blue duiker and the red duiker feed together. If danger approaches, the former warns the latter and sets him running off. Similarly, if a rumour of small importance gets abroad, it is soon magnified and exaggerated.]

No. 7. Iok-toi kiplengoi pēlio.
 They-send hares elephant.

Send hares to the elephant, not elephants to the hare.

[It is the duty of children to wait on elders, not elders on children. 'Seniores priores.']

No. 8. Iput-i tany aku pa-kelek aŋgwan.
 It-falls ox but of-the-legs four.

The ox falls in spite of its four legs.

[A man often makes a mistake, notwithstanding the fact that he is an intelligent being. 'Accidents happen even in the best-regulated families.']

No. 9. Ka-al-ke makata ak sot.
 They-have-bought-themselves goat's-hide and gourd.

A goat's hide buys a goat's hide and a gourd a gourd.

['An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.']

No. 10. Ke-girgir te pirtit ap toot 'nge-kir-chin pēk ko-ŋgēt-e.
Festinauit veluti mentula viatoris quae superba fit cum coniux amici in cuius domum intravit manus eius aqua lavat.

['Haste, haste, has no blessing.']

No. 11. Ke'pwat-e che logot.
 He-has-been-remembering milks hunt.

He thought of milk during the hunt.

[When driven by adversity to obtain his living by hunting, a man during an arduous stalk is apt to think of the days of plenty when he could quench his thirst by copious draughts of milk. 'O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint.']

No. 12. Kerichék-ap-erēnet ak chepo-lakwet kw-akenge.
 The-medicines-of-the-snake and of-the-child and-they-are-one.

It is all one whether one is bitten by an old snake or by its offspring: both are poisonous.

[A crime is none the less a crime because the person who commits it is a minor.]

No. 13.	Kerke	ki-mntio	ak	ki-mising.
	They-are-alike	slow-person	and	very } -person. fast }

[There is no difference between the slow speaker (or the person who speaks little) and the fast speaker (or the person who talks a great deal). It is quality not quantity that tells.]

No. 14.	Kerke	kipset	ak	kiptep.
	They-are-alike	raider	and	home-stayer.

[There is no difference in the long run between a man who raids and one who stays at home. Both run somewhat similar risks. The one may be killed in the enemy's country, the other may be killed by the enemy in his own home; and cattle diseases, drought, &c., affect both in much the same way.]

No. 15.	Ki-am-doi	Asis	a-mo-ki-am-doi
	He-is-owned-in-partnership	Sun	and-it-is-not-owned-in-partnership
	atep.		
	seat.		

The Sun is owned by everybody, but a man's body is owned by himself alone.

['Each for himself and God for us all.']

No. 16.	Ki-'ēn-i	tany	koñg	si	ki-char-e.
	It-is-closed	ox	eye	in-order-that	it-may-be-bled.

Cover the eyes of the ox you wish to bleed, or he will see the preparations you are making and fidget or run away.

['Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.' Proverbs i. 17.]

No. 17.	Ki-mwa	Asista :	' Ki-a-we	inyalil-o
	It-said	the-Sun :	' I-went	they-bully-me
	mee.'			
	agricultural-people.'			

The Sun said, ' Whatever I do, the farmers curse me. If there is no rain, they say I burn their crops; if there is much rain, they complain that I do not shine.'

[Said of discontented people.]

No. 18.	Ma-am-e	ilat	ket	oieñg.
	It-does-not-eat	thunder	tree	twice.

A tree is not twice struck by lightning.

[If you have to punish a person or a tribe, do it so thoroughly that it will not require to be done a second time.]

No. 19. Ma-chut-e ñgwanet ye-ma-mi-i
 It-enters-not the-poison where-they-are-not-there
 korotik.
 the-bloods.

The poison (of a poisoned arrow) does no harm if it does not enter the blood.

[‘Hard words break no bones.’]

No. 20. Ma-ki-eny-jin kamet moita met.
 It-is-not-slaughtered-to the-mother the-calf head.

One does not slaughter a calf before its mother’s eyes.

[‘Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother’s milk.’ Deut. xiv. 21.]

No. 21. Ma-ki-’ep-chin-iit chii rir-e.
 It-is-not-cut-to-ear } man he-cries.
 listened-to }

A man who is always crying is not listened to.

[Credence is not given to a man who is always crying ‘wolf’.]

No. 22. Ma-ki-’lok-toi ’ngor cheput.
 It-is-not-worn-thither garment caterpillar.

A person does not put on a garment if there is a caterpillar in it, as its spikes will irritate him.

[‘Cut off your nose to spite your face.’]

No. 23. Ma-ki-lol-e ma pei.
 It-is-not-lit fire waters.

You cannot light a fire in water.

[Said to a liar.]

No. 24. Ma-ki-met-toi mokoio
 It-is-not-thrown-away the-fruit-of-the-wild-fig-tree
 ne-mi-i ’ngoiny a-ki-sor ne-mi-i
 which-are-there below and-they-may-be-run-after which-are-there
 parak.
 above.

Don’t throw away the figs which grow at the bottom of the tree and hasten to pick those which grow at the top.

[‘A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.’]

No. 25. Ma-ki-mon-doi karna ma.
 It-is-not-despised iron fire.

Do not despise a piece of iron in the fire, for it will not be burnt, but when red hot it will be beaten into shape and may possibly become a formidable weapon.

[Despise not your enemies when they are in straitened circumstances.]

- No. 26. Ma-ki-mus-chin gai-pa-muren.¹
It-is-not-gone-in-the-morning-to house } -of-warriors.
kraal }

It is not usual to pay a visit to the warriors' hut in the early morning, as the visitor may be mistaken for a thief and killed.

['Look before you leap.']

- No. 27. Ma-ki-mwo-e kii kut.
 It-is-not-said thing mouth.

Do not say the first thing that comes into your head.

[‘Think twice before you speak.’]

- | | | | |
|---------|--------------------|---------|--------|
| No. 28. | Ma-ki-'por-chin | kimaket | susut. |
| | It-is-not-shown-to | hyena | bite. |

Don't show a hyena how well you can bite, for his jaws are more powerful than yours.

['Pride comes before a fall.']

- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| No. 29. | Ma-ki-rīp-e | pai | puch |
| | They-are-not-guarded | eleusine-grains | for-nothing |
| a-ma-am | toroi. | | |
| and-they-eat-not | pigs. | | |

Don't guard your plantations until the pigs begin to enter.

[Don't wear yourself out by needless work, for the time will come when you will require all your strength.]

- | | | | |
|---------|----------------------------|------|-------|
| No. 30. | Ma-ki-sar-u-ne | chii | ma. |
| | It-is-not-caused-to-rescue | man | fire. |

A man cannot be saved if he wishes to throw himself in the fire, and a quarrelsome person is sure to come to harm in course of time.

- No. 31. Ma-ki-sos-e kâp
 It-is-not-disliked the-house-of
 kip-kas-an a-ma-ki-ru kaita.
the-person-one-hears-is-coming-hither and-it-is-not-slept the-house.

One cannot say that one dislikes the house of somebody one has heard about if one has not had an opportunity of sleeping in his house.

[Do not condemn a person on hearsay.]

- No. 32. Ma-ki-tar-e ndara.
 It-is-not-finished remorse.

After a foolish action comes the remorse.

- No. 33. Ma-ki-'un-jin e korko.
It-is-not-washed-to hand woman.

A man does not wash a woman's hand.

¹ For *kait'-am-murenik*.

A man does not slave for a woman.

No. 34.	Ma-me-i	chii	nepo	chii.
	He-does-not-die	man	of	man.

No. 35.	Ma-mi-i	konyit	kimosak	kun	rotua.
	It-is-not-there	shame	one-sided one-edged }	like	knife.

No. 36.	Ma-mi-i	myat	ake	ne-rom-chin
	It-is-not-there	death	the-one	who-draws-for
ake	pei.			
the-other	waters.			

[Death fights his own battles unassisted, and always wins in the end.]

There is no saying without a double meaning.

[Look for a hidden meaning in every word that is spoken.]

No. 38.	Ma-nom-e	riria	káp-ingui.
	It-takes-not	ox-pecker-bird	land-of-vegetables.
		beefeater-bird	plantations.

The ox-pecker bird does not steal grain.

[The ox-pecker birds¹ live on the ticks and insects which are to be found on every ox, donkey, or other animal, and as many as ten or even twenty are sometimes to be seen on a single cow's back. If a man wanted to protect his crops from the birds, the ox-pecker bird would be amongst the last he would attempt to destroy. In like manner, if a man quarrelled with a neighbour he would not wage war on a third party.]

No. 39. Ma-oi-tos ma pei.
It-crosses-not fire waters.

A grass fire is stopped by a river, and an enemy or beast of prey is in a like manner hindered by a good zariba or hedge.

¹ *Buphaga erythrorhyncha*, Stanl.

- No. 40. Ma-tinye chorin doondon.¹
 He-has-not thief the-stranger.

A born thief will respect nothing, not even hospitality, and will as soon steal from his host as from anybody else.

- No. 41. Ma-tinye oliot chep-kam.
 It-has-not the-trade sister.

If a man wishes to make a bargain, he will cheat his own sister.

- No. 42. Mai-'os-e kimaket puch pamb-a'-pēt.²
 It-refuses-not hyena for-nothing the-journey-of-morning.

A hyena does not remain out during the hot hours of the day unless there is some reason for it.

[If one notices a change in the habits of a man or in the tactics of a foe, there is always some cause for it, and it is as well to be on one's guard.]

- No. 43. Me-men-e che-ki-men-e Cheptol.
 Do-not-be-puffed-up who-are-puffed-up Cheptol.

Do not be puffed up like the people of Cheptol.

[On one occasion when a great raid was projected the people of Cheptol, one of the geographical divisions, are said to have slaughtered and eaten all their oxen, so certain were they that they would capture large herds of cattle. They were, however, beaten, and had to return empty-handed to empty kraals. 'Pride comes before a fall.']

- No. 44. Me-pun kamasanet, pun kiboñgboñgit.
 Do-not-take the-by-path, take the-broad-road.

[A favourite saying when bidding a person farewell. Thieves and wild animals are supposed to frequent the by-paths; honest people and cattle use the broad roads.]

Another proverb of a like nature is the following:—

- Me-torok-te, têt-k-u.
 Do-not-go-to-meet-it, take-shelter.

If you see danger ahead, do not take any risk and go to meet it; hide by the roadside till the danger has passed.

- No. 45. Me-'ut-e kiruk korōsiek³ oieñg.
 He-bellows-not bull the-countries two.

A bull cannot bellow in two places at once.

- No. 46. Mur kimaket a-ki-sīl-e.
 It-is-brown hyena but-it-is-clawed.

¹ For *toondet*.

² For *pand'-ap-pēt*.

³ For *korotinuck*.

Although the hyena is brown in colour it has the marks of people's nails on its body (stripes).

[Whenever a striped hyena is seen in the neighbourhood of a house, people point at it, and everybody claims to have made a mark on it at some former time in order to recognize again the thief. 'Give a dog a bad name and hang him.']

No. 47. 'Nga-ñgom chorin, ko-tamne
 (Even)-if-he-is-clever thief, and-he-is-more-so
 kinindet.
the-person-who-finds-him-out.

However clever a rogue may be, when he is found out he must admit that there is somebody cleverer than he.

No. 48. 'Nga-oo pēlio ko-ma-ii-e
 (Even)-if-it-is-big elephant and-it-does-not-bear
 moiek oieñg.
the-calves two.

Notwithstanding the fact that the elephant is a big animal, it does not give birth to more than one at a time.

[However generous a rich man may be, there is a limit to everybody's generosity.]

No. 49. 'Ngi-'om-e-chi pōton kel-ok.
 Let-us-put-together-in tremble leg-one.

Let us put our trembling legs together in one place, and we shall obtain support one from the other.

[The necessity of joint action *or* 'Union is strength'.]

No. 50. 'Ngi-rep-e lakwa rotua ke-ken-ji ket.
 If-thou-seizest child knife and-thou-coaxest-him tree.

If you take a knife away from a child, give him a piece of wood instead.

[If you have to perform an unpleasant duty and hurt a person's feelings, do it as gently as possible.]

No. 51. 'Ngo-lul ket ne-yāmat ko-ti-to
 If-it-falls tree which-is-dry and-it-takes-with-it
 ne-tuon.
which-is-green.

If a dead tree falls, it carries with it a live one.

[If a criminal is punished, his innocent relations suffer as well.]

No. 52. 'Ngo-pan jii kwe, ko-me-pan-e
If-he-bewitches man he-goat, and-thou-bewitchest-not
kiruk.
bull.

Because a man has injured your goat, do not injure his bull.

[Do not seek revenge.]

No. 53. 'Ngo-'put-yi kororia ma a-ko-loŋg tukul-i ?
If-it-falls-into feather fire and-it-crosses all ?

If a feather falls into the fire, can it be wholly saved ?

Also: 'Ngo-'put-yi tany kering ko-mo-loŋg-u
If-it-falls-into ox pit and-it-does-not-cross-hither
kororik.

the-feathers.

If an ox falls into a pit, it will at least leave some of its hairs at the bottom.

[If a foe attacks you, you will suffer some damage, even if you are in a position to beat him off.]

No. 54. 'Ngo-samis-it muria kwa ko.
If-it-stinks rat and-it-goes home.

If a rat stinks, it goes home ; and if a man is ill, he goes to his relations to be attended to and cared for.

['Blood is thicker than water.']

No. 55. Somnyo mesundei.
Uncircumcised-girl darkness. }
no-moon. }

Darkness is like an uncircumcised girl.

[Just as an uncircumcised girl, who only wears a small apron of strips of leather, feels no shame, so a woman does not mind being naked in the dark.]

No. 56. Tandus ko po-tiony ŋgwan ko
Pleasant it-may-be of-animal bitter it-may-be
po-chii.
of-man.

What is pleasant to an animal may be bitter to a man.

['One man's meat is another man's poison.']

No. 57. Tapan ! korán-ni ki-'pat ilat.
Look ! land-this it-cultivated thunder.

Look ! This land has been struck by lightning.

[Said of a plot made ready for planting where the soil has been well turned over. It is supposed that the earth has been torn to pieces like a tree struck by lightning.]

TONGŌCHIK-AP-NANDI

NANDI ENIGMAS

Riddles or enigmas are the sport of children and young people. They are only asked after dark.

The propounder says: Tongoch. The others reply: Cho.

No. 1. A-koi ak a po-minan.
Enigma. I-am-tall and I-am of-red-earth-in-my-hair.

Reply. Mosongiot.
 The-millet-plant.

I am tall and my hair has red earth in it. What am I?

The millet plant.

[The millet plant is tall, and the flower at the top is coloured much like hair dyed red.]

No. 2. Alak-u yu a-alok yu
Enigma. Go-round here and-I-go-round here
 te-'p-ki-tui-ye ko-pirir-ech ēun.
 again-afterwards-we-meet } and-they-are-red-to-us hands.
 when-we-meet-again }

Reply. Kopchopinek.
 The-kopchopinek-fruit.

If you go round there and I go round here, why will our hands be red when we meet again?

Because we shall have eaten kopchopinek fruit.

[Cf. the Masai riddle, 'What will your hands be like if we meet after you have gone round that part of the mountain? The fruit of the *Ximenia americana*, which stains everything blood-red.']

No. 3. Anyiny ingua tere-'p-oiin.
Enigma. It-is-sweet vegetable cooking-pot-of-spirits.

Reply. Kongaiyat.
 The-white-ant-in-flying-stage.

What is the sweet vegetable that comes out of the cooking-pot of the spirits of the deceased? The white ant.

[The white ant is considered a great delicacy, especially during the flying stage. As it lives in the ground, it is supposed to come from the cooking-pot of the spirits of the deceased.]

No. 4. Apuk ma-pa.
Enigma. It-pours-out it-does-not-go.

Reply. Kina-ap-teta.
 The-teat-of-the-cow.

What is it that produces liquid and yet cannot let the liquid flow when it wishes? A cow's udder.

No. 5. A-tenden ak a po-Tuken.
Enigma. I-am-thin and I-am of-Kamasia.

Reply. Etiet.
 The bridge.

I am thin and I come from Kamasia. What am I? A bridge.
 [The Nandi are said to have learnt the art of making bridges from the Kamasia.]

No. 6. A-tinye cheptán-nyō ne-'ngo-wendi kâp-tich
Enigma. I-have the-girl-my who-if-she-goes the-cattle-kraal
 ko-'sik-ot ta-nyo-ne ka
 and-she-sings-as-she-goes again-she-comes hut
 ko-sis-anu.
 and-she-is-silent-as-she-comes.

Reply. Sotonik.
 The-milk-calabashes.

What are the things which as they go to the cattle-kraal sing, whilst as they return home are silent? The milk calabashes.

[When empty the milk calabashes knock against one another and make a noise; but when full they make no sound.]

No. 7. A-tinye cheptán-nyō ne-piiy-onyi
Enigma. I-have the-girl-my who-has-enough-to-eat
 mutai ko-runkut lakat.
 every-morning and-she-sleeps-hungry night.

Reply. Kweyot.
 The-broom.

I have a daughter who gets a good meal every morning, but she goes to bed hungry at night. What is she? A broom.

[The huts and compounds are swept out every morning, and a broom has a good meal of dust and dirt; but it goes hungry till the next morning.]

No. 8. A-tinye choruéen-nyō n-ingo-'ok-te ko-lapat.
Enigma. I-have the-friend-my whom-if-I-send and-he-runs.

Reply. Moiet.
 The belly.

I have a friend, and if I send him anywhere he runs with me.
What am I ? The belly.

[If a person feels the pangs of hunger, his legs will move quickly in order to bring him to a place where food can be obtained.]

No. 9. A-tinye choruén-nyō ne-ki-mo-koto-me
Enigma. I-have the-friend-my who-did-not-yet-die
 ko-re mo kut ko-me.
 and-it-brings-him belly until he-may-die.

Reply. Motonda.
 The vulture.

I have a friend who would not die were it not for his belly's sake.
What is my friend ? A vulture.

[A hungry vulture will run any risk to obtain food, and can be easily killed when settled on the ground feeding. Were it not for this he might remain flying about in the heavens and never be touched.]

No. 10. A-tinye lakwén-nyō ne-ki-ko-nai ko-chor-e.
Enigma. I-have the-child-my who-is-known and-it-steals.

Reply. Muriat.
 The rat.

I have a child who is known to steal. What is my child ? A rat.

No. 11. A-tinye lakwet ne-mīban.
Enigma. I-have the-child who-runs-fast.

Reply. Segemyat.
 The-bee.

What is it which I possess that moves very rapidly ? A bee.

No. 12. A-tinye lakwet ne-sil-u-o
Enigma. I-have the-child who-draws-hither-me
 pêk-ap-Kepen.
 waters-of-Kepen.

Reply. Segemyat.
 The-bee.

I have a child that draws water for me from the rocks. What is my child ? A bee.

[A beehive made in the rocks is called Kepen, or cave.]

No. 13. A-tinye lakōk pokol añg tukul
Enigma. I-have the-children hundred and all
 ko-chuchun-o.
 and-they-suck-me.

Reply. Toloita ak kureyuek.
The-central-pole-of-the-house and the-poles-of-the-roof.

I have a hundred children and I support them all. What am I and what are they?

The central pole of the house and the poles of the roof.

No. 14. A-tinye mukulen aku pa-papa.
Enigma. I-have circular-things but of-Father.

Reply. Chepwilpwilōk.
The-biceps.

I have something which is round, but which really belongs to my father. What is it? My biceps.

[A child's strength is always at his father's disposal.]

No. 15. Chapoi-i litei.
Enigma. It-slips whetstone.

Reply. Koito.
The-liver.

What slips in the hand like a knife on the whetstone? Liver.

No. 16. Char-chi-n asis kulua.
Enigma. It-rises-out-of sun valley.

Reply. Taet.
The-brass-wire.

What is the sun rising out of the valley like? Brass wire.

[If the sun comes out when one is in the valley, the glare is like polished brass wire.]

No. 17. I-ie tururik annan i-ie
Enigma. Thou-drinkest the-dirty-waters or thou-drinkest
che-tililin.
which-are-clean.

Reply. Oi-'e tururik.
I-drink the-dirty-waters.

Which would you prefer, water made dirty by the feet of oxen or clean water?

I would rather have the dirty water, as I should then own cattle.

No. 18. I-let-u annan i-'ndoī-i.
Enigma. Thou-comest-after or thou-precedest.

Reply. A-let-u.
I-come-after.

[This is equivalent to: 'Will you die after or before me?' The reply is obvious.]

No. 19. I-lu-e sotet ne-marīch-kut
Enigma. Thou-drikest-milk the-calabash which-is-wide-mouth
 annan ne-para-kut.
 or which-is-narrow-mouth.

Reply. M-a-lu-e.
 I-drink-not-milk.

Which would you prefer, to drink milk from a calabash which has a wide mouth or from one which has a narrow mouth ?

I will drink from neither.

[Calabashes with narrow mouths are said to be males ; those with wide mouths, females.]

No. 20. Inga-'aĩg-anu chepo-mee
Enigma. If-I-see-coming-towards-me of-agricultural-people
 a-rori kut a-siep patai.
 and-I-laugh very-much I-lie-on back.

Reply. Iseriat.
 The-louse.

If I see a person coming towards me I only laugh and turn over on my back. What am I ? A louse.

[Cf. the Masai proverb, 'One finger will not kill a louse.']

Also : Inga-'aĩg-anu ane a-tior-chi
 If-I-see-him-coming-towards-me I I-kick-at
 pures konyan.
 thing-of-no-value eyes.

Reply. Kimitia.
 Flea.

If I see a person coming towards me I kick dust into his eyes, *i. e.* I escape. What am I ? A flea.

[A flea jumps and escapes if it sees a finger coming towards it.]

No. 21. Inga-i koiĩtin iĩt marinwek-ap-Kony.
Enigma. If-thou-art counter count the-nullahs-of-Mt.-Elgon.

Reply. Pók.
 The-honey-comb.

What is counting the nullahs on Mt. Elgon like ?

Counting the cells in honey-comb.

No. 22. Ingephe ainón-ni inge-cheĩg gorko
Enigma. Let-us-go the-river-this let-us-search woman
 ne-chaĩg-ingorai.
 who-many-garments.

Reply. Sasurik.
The-wild-bananas.

There lives by the river a woman who has many garments. What is she? The wild banana plant.

[The wild banana plant grows in great luxuriance in Western Nandi.]

No. 23. Ingephe ainón-ni inge-cheñg gorko
Enigma. Let-us-go the-river-this let-us-search woman
ne-tui.
who-is-black.

Reply. Sengwet.
The-obsidian.

There lives by the river a black woman. What is she? Obsidian.

[Obsidian, which is generally black in colour, is a glass produced by volcanoes. It is found in large quantities in various parts of East Africa.]

No. 24. Ip-u tapet ki-am-e ilet.
Enigma. Bring the-cup and-we-eat-with the-thunder.

Reply. Kumiat.
The-honey.

What is in the cup from which both the thunder-god and ourselves obtain food? Honey.

[The thunder-god is supposed to visit the honey-barrels from time to time and take his supply of honey from them.]

No. 25. I-'u-i-e-ke cheptam annan
Enigma. Thou-bindest-thyself-the-waist-with dry-thing or
ingiriren.
soft-piece-of-hide.

Reply. Legetio ak eren.
Belt and snake.

Which would you rather bind round your waist, a dry stick or a soft cord? A dry stick, because a soft cord is a snake.

[There is some play on the words 'ingiriren' and 'eren'. 'Ingiriren' means a piece of dressed hide, 'ingi-iur eren,' May he prod (the) snake.]

No. 26. Iro! Kechiré-chun ko-mo tuiyot.
Enigma. Look! The-sheep-those and-they-are-not the-crowd.

Reply. Tindinyek.
The-turfs.

There is a flock of sheep grazing, and the animals are not crowded together. What do they remind you of?

Turf cut ready for burning.

[Manure is made from the ashes of turf which is cut into sods, turned over, and dried. Only portions of the turf are visible when it is being dried, and the patches of green amongst the black or red earth are said to resemble a flock of sheep scattered over a large field.]

No. 27. I-ru-e kot-ap-tesiimik annan
Enigma. Wilt-thou-sleep the-hut-of-the-castrated-goats or
 nepo-mengichek.
 of-the-rams.

Reply. Leluek ak kimaketök.
 The-jackals and the-hyenas.

Would you rather sleep in the goats' shed or in the sheep pen?

I will sleep in neither, for the goats are the jackals and the sheep the hyenas.

[Goats and sheep are sometimes styled jackals and hyenas, for when they enter a plantation they eat up everything.]

No. 28. Iut-yin-dos a-ma-par-i-ke.
Enigma. They-bellow-at-one-another and-they-do-not-kill-one-another.

Reply. Aiyuet.
 The-axe.

What are the things which make a noise at one another, like bulls bellowing before a fight, but which do not hurt one another? Axes.

[It is usual in Nandi, when women cut firewood, for two to chop at the same tree, like blacksmiths in England hammering on an anvil. Each axe in turn is said to challenge the other to fight, but no harm is done.]

No. 29. Ka-a-'chut rike kwe Lem.
Enigma. I-have-pulled thong and-it-goes Kavirondo.

Reply. Luket.
 The-war-party.

What is like a thong which when stretched reaches from Nandi to Kavirondo? A war-party.

[When on the war-path the Nandi always march in single file.]

No. 30. Ka-a-nyor-u koko
Enigma. I-have-met-with grandmother

ko-kesen-isye.
 she-was-carrying (something)-on-her-back.

Reply. Iseriat.
 The-louse.

What does an old woman carry on her back? Lice.

[An old woman is unable to carry a load of any description.]

No. 31. Ka-a-nyor-u komit ko-pun-u pukaa kut.
Enigma. I-have-met-with thy-mother and-it-issues froth mouth.

Reply. Teret-ap-kimoi.
 The-pot-of-porridge.

I saw your mother, and there was froth coming from her mouth.
What is she? The pot of porridge bubbling over at the fire.

[After a child has been weaned the porridge-pot is said to be his mother.]

No. 32. Ka-a-tui-ye kamet ko-ip-e
Enigma. I-have-met-together-with the-mother she-was-carrying
 meti'-p-chii.
 the-head-of-man.

Reply. Chepololet.
 The-pumpkin.

I met a woman carrying something which resembled a man's head.
What was it? A pumpkin.

No. 33. Ka-a-tui-ye kōnut
Enigma. I-have-met-together-with thy-father
 ko-'lak-anu sambu.
 and-he-wore-and-came-hither fur-cloak.

Reply. Cheptiet.
 The-caterpillar.

I have met your father wearing his fur cloak. What does he resemble?
 A caterpillar.

[An old man wrapped up in a fur cloak and walking slowly is said to look like a caterpillar.]

No. 34. Karap i-nyo kōin-nyō i-iro
Enigma. Evening and-thou-comest the-house-my and-thou-seest
 lakōk-chōk inga-a-'uriet.
 the-children-my if-I-drive-them-away.

Reply. Cherengis.
 House-lizard.

If you come to my house in the evening you will see me drive away my children. What am I? The house lizard.

[When the house lizard falls from the roof or ceiling of a hut on to

¹ For *metit-ap-chii*.

Reply. Paiyuat.
The-cleusine-plant.

I shot off my arrow and it was not feathered, but when I went to fetch it, it was feathered. What was my arrow? The eleusine plant.

[The head of the eleusine plant resembles somewhat the feathered end of an arrow. When sown, the grain has no feathers, but when reaped the head has formed.]

No. 39.	Ki-a-'ok-te	kirnog	ko-pa	ingoiny.
<i>Enigma.</i>	I-sent	advisers	and-they-went	below.

Reply. Lumeyuek.
The-poles.

I dispatched the advisers, and they entered the earth. What were they? The poles of a house.

[Here the word adviser, counsellor, or spokesman—the prop or mainstay of the Nandi system of government—is used as synonymous with the outside poles (*i. e.* the principal support) of a house.]

No. 40.	Ki-a-'pat	imbarén-nyō	nette	yu	ok
<i>Enigma.</i>	I-cultivated	the-plantation-my	from	here	and to

yun	ko-tar	siiya.
there	and-it-has-finished-it	nail.

Reply. Chepkeswet.
The-knife.



FIG. 52 (scale $\frac{1}{4}$). *Chepkewet*, small knife.

I have a large plantation, and I finished the work on it with my nail. What is my nail? A small knife.

[The last part of the work on a millet plantation, *viz.* the harvest, is performed with the help of a small knife, scarcely bigger or sharper than one's nail.]

No. 41.	Ki-a-wir	chepkemis	ko-put-ye
<i>Enigma.</i>	I-threw	chepkemis-bird	and-it-fell-thither

mesua.
mesuot-tree.

Reply. Ñgariet.
The-red-clay.

I threw a club at the chepkemis bird, and it fell by a mesuot tree.
What was the bird? Red clay.

[The chepkemis bird—a small bird with a red breast—is said to live where the red clay is found with which the warriors paint their faces and bodies. If one of these birds were seen, it would be almost certain that some of the red clay would not be far away.]

No. 42. Ki-a-tarñgañg-e a-tar are.
Enigma. I-lay-on-my-back I-may-finish kids.
Reply. Koiit'-ap-pai.
The-grindstone.

I lay on by my back in order that I might finish (eating) the kids. What am I? A grindstone.

[A grindstone when not in use is placed on its side against the wall of the hut. When laid on its back, it is for the purpose of crushing grain. *Are*, though originally the equivalent of kids, is also used for the young of any animal, and is here employed for the young or seed of corn.]

No. 43. Ki-a-u, 'ngo-a-u-e ko somok
Enigma. I-moved, when-I-moved and-they-are three
nêko, te-'p-a-ket-u-ke ko
the-goats, again-afterwards-I-return-hither-myself and-they-are
somok ko-keny.
three still.
Reply. Koiik-am-ma.
The-stones-of-the-fire.

I moved my abode and left three goats behind; when I returned there were still three goats. What were the goats? The fire stones.

[Cooking-pots are always rested on three stones, which are left behind when a person moves.]

No. 44. Ki-a-u kut a-meny or-tapan.
Enigma. I-moved until I-may-stay road-side.
Reply. Kosomek.
The-small-flies-which-follow-bees.

What is the thing that continually changes its abode until it finally settles by the way-side? The small fly which follows the bee into its hive, where it dies.

No. 45. Ki-a-u kut ko-put terget-ap-lakwet.
Enigma. I-moved until it-may-drop the-calabash-of-the-child.
Reply. Talusiet.
The-tick.

What does it remind one of if a journey is so long that a child at length drops the gourd it is carrying from sheer weariness?

A tick which, having gorged itself on an ox, is unable to keep its hold any more and falls off.

No. 46. Ki-a-u, tun 'nga-it-u
Enigma. I-moved, afterwards if-I-arrive-hither

 ki-tien-e kot sondoiyo.
 it-is-being-danced the-house old-men's-dance.

Reply. Kimiték.
 The-fleas.

What should I find dancing the *sondoiyo* dance in my house were I to leave it for a time and then return? Fleas.

[Vermin of all kinds are common in Nandi, especially in deserted huts or kraals.]

No. 47. Ki-a-u, tun 'nga-it-u kwa
Enigma. I-moved, afterwards if-I-arrive-hither and

 ki-'tur-e kot sigilgil.
 they-lean-against the-house women's-walking-sticks.

Reply. Susuek.
 The-grasses.



FIG. 53 (scale $\frac{1}{10}$). Woman's walking-stick.

If I were to move and then to return to my house I should find women's walking-sticks standing up against the walls. What are the walking-sticks? Blades of grass.

[Women use thin walking-sticks like reeds. When weeds have sprung up around and in a deserted hut, they are said to be leaning up against the walls like walking-sticks.]

No. 48. Ki-a-we koi-in aũg-nya-it-ite
Enigma. I-went the-house-that when-I-arrived-thither

 ke-me, a-me akine.
 they-have-died, and-I-die myself.

Reply. Ruondo.
 The-sleep.

When I arrived at a certain house and found the occupants dead, I died myself. What was the death? Sleep.

- No. 53.** Kipkeleny tulua.
Enigma. The-lifter mountain.
Reply. Popat.
 The-mushroom.

What lifts up a mountain? A mushroom.

[A mushroom in sprouting frequently pushes aside a clod of earth which, owing to its size, might well have prevented it from growing at all.]

- No. 54.** Kipkukur ki-wo to.
Enigma. Warrior's-bell it-went hiding-place.
Reply. Puñguñgwet.
 The-mole.

What does a warrior's bell which is hidden away (*i. e.* muffled) remind you of? A mole.

[A mole in its hole makes much the same noise as a muffled bell.]

- No. 55.** Kororon tarit
Enigma. They-are-beautiful birds
 a-m-oon-e takipos.
 and-they-do-not-chase-away } wagtail.
 surpass }
- Reply.* Koroiiyet.
 The-Colobus-monkey.

There are many beautiful birds, but they do not surpass the wagtail. What does this bird remind you of? The Colobus monkey.

[The colour of both the wagtail of Nandi and the Colobus monkey is black and white, and although there are other handsome birds and monkeys it would be difficult to find anything to surpass either in beauty. The wagtail is one of the few songsters in East Africa, its song often reminding one of a canary bird.]

- No. 56.** Mwaib'-a'-pēlio¹ ki-'le kor.
Enigma. The-fat-of-elephant it-said it-is-dry.
Reply. Ŋgenda.
 The-salt-lick.

The fat of the elephant said: 'What is the use of me? I am dry.' What is the fat? The salt-lick.

[The Nandi prize the fat of elephants, which they use to anoint their bodies with, and even when it becomes dry and hard, it is as good as when liquid and moist, just as the salt of the salt-licks, which though mixed with mud and sand, is as good as pure salt.]

¹ For *mwaib'-ap-pēliot*.

No. 57. Kot-ap-koko ikongen tukul.
Enigma. The-hut-of-grandmother small-baskets all.

Reply. Keringonik.
 The-pits.

Why is the floor of grandmother's hut like small baskets?

Because the goats and sheep have stamped or made holes in it.

[After a house has been erected for some time the floor of the goats' compartment becomes full of holes.]

No. 58. Lamaiyua ka-'ngat-an.
Enigma. Ximenia-Americana it-has-grown-hither.

Reply. Saruriet-am-mengit.
 The-tail-of-the-ram.

What grows rapidly like a *lamaiyuet* tree?

The tail of a (fat-tailed) sheep.

No. 59. Mi-i-te ket Soiin ne-mo-tinye soko.
Enigma. It-is-there tree Soiin which-not-has leaves.

Reply. Koiita.
 The-stone.

There are trees in Soiin which have no leaves. What are they?
 Stones.

Also : Mi-i ket Soiin ne-mo-tinye tikitio.
 There-is tree Soiin which-not-has root.

Koiita.
 The-stone.

There are trees in Soiin which have no roots. What are they?
 Stones.

[Soiin, the southern county of Nandi, is a mountainous and barren land, in which there are but few trees.]

No. 60. Nāget ko-'p-chep-komit a-me-i-it-e.
Enigma. It-is-near house-of-thy-sister and-thou-dost-not-arrive.

Reply. Oret-ap-patai.
 The-road-of-back. }
 The-back-bone. }

Thy sister's house is near, yet thou canst not reach it. What is thy sister's house? The back-bone.

No. 61. 'Nga-a-we koi-in a-pan,
Enigma. If-I-go the-house-that and-I-leave-magic,
 ta-a-we koi-in a-pau.
 again-I-go the-house-that and-I-leave-magic.

Reply. Ñgulek.
 The-spittle.

No matter where I go I am sure to leave something behind by which a wizard or a witch can make me ill. What do I leave behind?
Spittle.

[The Nandi spit freely, not only to avert ill-luck but to relieve the excessive amount of saliva that collects in their mouths. If a wizard or a witch were to collect any of this saliva, it is believed, the person from whom it emanated could be bewitched.]

No. 62. Ngiri, ngiri.
Enigma. That-yonder, that-yonder.

Reply. Tomirimir.
 A-man's-shadow.

[All Nandi, but more particularly children, are very afraid of a shadow, as it is believed that a man's shadow lives after his death. Riddles, as already stated, are only asked after dark, and this one might be turned as follows: 'What can I see in the dark? Ghosts.']

No. 63. Ñgurur-in a-ma-am-in.
Enigma. It-looks-down-at-thee but-it-does-not-eat-thee.

Reply. Serut.
 The-nose.

What is the thing which looks down at you but which does not eat you? The nose.

No. 64. Nîr¹ ma-ñget.
Enigma. It-is-drawn-out not-it-breaks.

Reply. Ainet annan oret.
 The-river or the-road.

What is it that does not break though you may draw it out as far as you like? A river or a road.

No. 65. Oon-w-a piich che-koiin
Enigma. They-chase-me-hither people which-are-long
 kelien.
 legs.

Reply. Robta.
 The-rain.

What are the long-legged people who have made me fly back home?
The drops of rain.

¹ This word is generally used for drawing the entrails out of a slaughtered animal.

No. 66. Oswa-ap-Īlat ko-kwer ingoiny.
Enigma. The-old-things-of-Thunder and-they-arrive ground.
Reply. Chemñigisir ak kwapal.
 Inner-rainbow and outer-rainbow.

What are the thunder-god's discarded garments which fall on the earth? The inner and outer rings of the rainbow.¹

No. 67. Samo koko samo
Enigma. Many-coloured grandmother many-coloured
 chepo-kikat.

the-daughter-of-the-person-who-salutes-(her).

Reply. Kimnyet ak kirokoret.
 The-porridge and the-basket.

If you see a child resembling in appearance its grandmother, what does it remind you of?

Porridge which has been put in a basket, and which on being taken out again has assumed the shape and taken the markings of the basket.

[' Like master, like man. ']

No. 68. Siisi!
Enigma. An exclamation of despair.

Reply. Toiek.
 The-strangers.

When does one say : ' What *shall* I do ? '

When strangers arrive and there is no food in the house.

[The Nandi are most hospitable to people of their own *mat*,² but, if some strangers were to arrive after the evening meal, the host might be at his wits' end to know how to procure food for them, and might unwittingly have to run the risk of being considered stingy.]

No. 69. Sot'-ap-kok
Enigma. Gourd-of-warriors'-assembly-place

ma-nye che.
 it-has-not-become-full milks.

Reply. Ñgototek.
 The-cow-dung.

The milk calabashes taken to the warriors' assembly place are never full. What does the milk resemble in this respect? Cow-dung.

[The warriors' assembly places are generally in or near the cattle kraals, and just as these places are never allowed to fill with cattle dung, so the warriors never leave their milk calabashes full of milk.]

¹ Vide p. 100.

² Vide p. 77.

- No. 70.** Tapalia-kuk.
Enigma. Thing-against-which-one-has-struck-one's-foot.
Reply. Kanōkut.
 Omen.

If I strike my foot against something, what does it signify?
 It is an omen for good or evil.¹

- No. 71.** Tapen! Tōtōn-nin ki-tet
Enigma. Look! The-wall-that-(inside-the-house) it-arranged-(it)
 oi.
 spirits.
Reply. Kelek.
 The-teeth.

What is the wall inside a man's house (body) which was made by the spirits (of his ancestors)? His teeth.

- No. 72.** Tapen tu-chun! Iok-i
Enigma. Look-at the-oxen-those! It-is-herding-them
 kimnyelnyel.
 thing-which-is-blown-about-by-the-wind.

- Reply.* Sombet.
 The-ostrich-feather-head-dress.

What is the thing which, though so weak that it is blown about by the wind, is able to herd oxen?

The ostrich-feather head-dress.

[In Nandi the grass is frequently so high that only a warrior's head-dress can be seen above it, and at first sight it often appears as if a herd of oxen were being guarded by the ostrich feathers, which are the plaything of every gust of wind.]

- No. 73.** Tapen tu-chun! Iok-i
Enigma. Look-at the-oxen-those! It-is-herding-them
 kipsitye.
 red-brown-thing.

- Reply.* Kwanget.
 The-bow.

What is the red-brown thing that is herding the cattle?

The bow.

[As in the last riddle, when the grass is long a person herding cattle is often quite concealed from view, and it appears as if his bow, which is red-brown in colour, is doing the work of herdsman.]

¹ *Vide* p. 79.

No. 74. Telel koiech.
Enigma. Stand all-night.
Reply. Arawet ak kuinet-ap-teta.
 The-moon and the-horn-of-the-ox.

What remains erect all night ?

The moon and the horn of an ox.

No. 75. Tos ! I-bany kōn met-i ?
Enigma. I-don't-know ! Thou-climbest thy-father head ?
Reply. Ñgotit.
 The-spear.

What would climbing on to your father's head be like ?

Climbing a spear.

[A Nandi *paterfamilias* would resent his son climbing on to his head, and the son's appearance, were he bold enough to attempt this, would be much the same as if he were to try and climb a spear.]

No. 76. Tui a-ma-po ke-rar
Enigma. Black and-they-do-not-make-it it-is-cut
 kipoia.
 warrior's-garment.

Reply. Chepkwogit.
 The-crow.

What is it that is not made by hand, that is black, and is fashioned like a warrior's garment (*i. e.* with hairs on it) ? A crow.

1909 Starr Congo.pdf

308

MAY, 1909.

VOL. XII. PAGES 96-222

Proceedings

—OF THE—

Davenport Academy of Sciences

ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES FROM THE CONGO FREE STATE: AN AFRICAN MISCELLANY

BY FREDERICK STARR

Published from the Income of the
Putnam Memorial Fund



DAVENPORT, IOWA, U. S. A.
DAVENPORT ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
1909

FRED LOCKE
RARE WESTERN B
4227
PORTLA

PROVERBS OF UPPER CONGO TRIBES.

Various writers have printed collections of proverbs from African tribes. These collections have usually come from true negro, not from Bantu, tribes. Examples of Congo proverbs are scattered through many books. Of collections of such proverbs we may mention Taylor's *Saws from Swaheli Land*, Ruskin's *Proverbs, Fables, Similes and Sayings of the Bamongo*, and Cordeiro da Matta's *Jisabu, jiheng'ele, ifika ni jinongonongo, jesoneke mu Kimbundu ni puto kua mon' Angola*. The latter title may be translated *The philosophy of the people in Angolan proverbs* and the author was a native of Angola.

In 1904 Mr. Farris (Bakola—native name) and Dr. Royal J. Dye, located as missionaries at Bolengi, close to the Equator, and but a short distance below Coquilhatville (formerly Equatorville) printed a collection of Kkundu proverbs under the title *Bakolo bi' ampaka ba Nkundo. Bikolongo la nsako. Beki Bakola otakan-yaka*. [Stories of the elders of Nkundo. Adages and proverbs. Gathered by Bakola.] The collection consists of three hundred and thirteen proverbs and forms a small 16° volume of twenty-three pages. It was my purpose, with the assistance of Dr. Dye and native helpers, to reprint this whole list with translation and explanation of all the proverbs. Fever prevented my carrying the plan to completion. Part of the collection is here given. The order and numbering of the original are followed, although a few "dark sayings" have been omitted. The use of proverbs among the Nkundu is general. It is a common custom, when a younger person meets an older or wiser one, to ask the aged or wise man for an *ekolongo*—i. e. a saying or proverb, a bit of wisdom.

A small collection of Ntumba proverbs is given. These were neatly written down for me at Ikoko by a native who had learned to write in the mission school. They were translated for me into English by Frank, a Bakongo by birth, who knows the language of the Bobangi, Ntumba and Bakongo and speaks excellent and discriminating English. He is one of the native preachers assisting the Rev. Joseph Clark at Ikoko. Unfortunately, there is confusion in his numbering of the translations. It has seemed best then to give only the English version of these proverbs.

A few Foto proverbs are here given. These were secured for me by Annie M. (Mrs. William L.) Forfeitt. They are printed just as she wrote them down.

NKUNDU PROVERBS.

1. Aki'mi l'omi, ncukaki senenge,
Njobwey'omi, njoluka senenge.
When I had a husband, I did not divide the waters;
When my husband died, I divided the waters.
(The figure is drawn from water in the forest, divided into small streams or threads by streaks of mud. The meaning is—I became fickle—divided in mind and purpose.)
2. Aolocwela nkumba.
He has become hunch-backed.
(He humps over one task; sticks only to one thing.)
3. Baanga 'aki eka nkoko l'isëli,
Mbile 'aanga, mbile 'alolombo.
The timid one with the elder of reputation,
One day they fear him; one day they beg of him.
4. Bacwaka lifaiya ek'iseka: "Meka meka;"
Njocwa lifaiya ek'iseka, mela mela. (Lolo.)
You scold the leopard
And you scold the people who are with him.
(You cannot blame one person in a group who have done wrong.
Scold one, scold all.)
5. Bafela nkoi, bafel'and'ol'anza.
They spread a net for you and you saw it;
Now that you are caught, you grumble.
7. Bank'a'nzala, we kika mbimbe!
These are hungry; you are the only one to be filled!
8. Baino 'aki mbuji.
The footprints of the *mbudji*.
(The *mbudji* is the water antelope. The leopard met her in the way and said "I am tired; let me go along with you and your family;" he was afraid of her horns so took the rear; she led the way, her young ones following. Leopard ate one after another; then said to himself "The young ones gave me no trouble; I will take her from behind." When you are weak, don't show your weakness.)
9. Bakinaka nd'okitake.
They give bountifully to the one who receives (entertains?)
(He who refuses, gets nought.)
10. Bakoka; wangana; tokel'a we mo?
They gave to you; you deny; what shall we do with you?

11. Bokotomaki nda'telo;
Wambambo nd'ojiko!
They sent you up onto the roof;
What are you feeling for up there in the loft (storage place)?
12. Bana ntasonganaka'dongi.
Children have not all the same faces.
13. Banjuol'a nkesa
Nk'anyomaki l'okolo.
They greet me in the morning;
At night they call me names.
(Good to my face; bad behind my back.)
14. Bank'afe,—outotenola jimo!
Two plantains only—you eat one!
(You cut away the support beneath you!)
15. Baoka nyongo nd'okeji;
Balongo baocia ngele;
Bakanela bokofo wa nyang'oleki.
They killed their mother in the swamp;
Her blood has gone down the river;
They think her fickleness was extreme.
(She brought ill-repute on them.)
16. Basangi nyango ntayaotajak'iwawa.
Who have the same mother are not poisoned by the same
snake.
(They will assist each other in danger.)
17. Basi ndomwa: "Feça ça."
Water in your mouth; "blow fire."
(When in debt and your creditor is urgent; this said, is equal to "Give
me a chance.")
19. Batuj'ituji a mboka wete l'alaki.
The smith is smithing in the path because of teachers.
(They have been taught their trade. Instruction is necessary: it must
precede accomplishment.)
20. "Beliya, tocikele nkoi ije ikae!"
"Beliya, give the leopard his place."
(The *beliya* is a small animal. Insignificant beings must give way to
important ones.)
21. Besoombo locwela:—
Bacwa jombo bafocutela.

The leaves of *besombo* thrown down:—

Are in the grave and in every turn.

(The *besombo* is a sacred plant, the leaves of which are used in secret ceremonies. The proverb means that an article once taken from its proper place is never restored.)

22. Biçe'pe isan'isangi!

Two countries—do they imitate each others' games!

23. Bita nkombe o l'onto o f'a nsoso;

Bas'ilongo o l'ont'ofea mbombi'aoi.

Scare away the hawk, you people who have no chickens;
Scold your relatives, you who do not know how to keep counsel.

(You're a fool to scare away hawks needlessly;
You're a fool to alienate your relatives.)

24. Bobimbo nko lobya,

Nk'ome w'etuka.

The *bobimbo* bears no great flowers;
But what large fruit it has.

(Show is not always a sign of substance.)

25. "Bobina ntoata, ngomo nkeketela!"

"You have not had a dance; why are you carrying a dance drum?"

(The thing does not concern you. Why meddle in another's business?)

26. Bocik'a nsoso:

Ng'omanga ntokumba, ifoyala lobi enkolonkoko.

Spare the chicken:

If the wild-cat does not take it, it will become large.

(Do not despise small things.)

27. Bofaiy'ekendo, jidak'obe.

The fickle stranger, has bad ways.

28. Bofaiya nko nyango, nk'oki'nd'omocwela.

The motherless stranger, enters everywhere.

(An ill-mannered person is assumed to have had no maternal care and instruction.)

29. Bofaiya ntayasukaka.

The stranger never limits himself.

(One at home should, of course, do so.)

30. "Bojang'okam! nkocikaki nda lofaka,

Okici ndansi okeli mo?

Nyama en'asembe ekukoji na?

My net! I left you hung on a stick,
 You are down, what are you doing there?
 What animal's tread has pushed you aside?

(Said in joy, when one thinks he has gained something. The net is a snare net for catching animals.)

31. "Bokale, nyang'olenga,
 Ofonjukol'emi ecima."

"Comrade (partner, or wife) lest you should betray me
 Do not break down my dam."

(A person who hates you will get you to do something that seems all right, to harm you.)

32. Bokeke aleba, ba nkal'atonga.
 Foolish fish! They are building a fence about you.

33. Bokeng'a mpota, jobong'a nganja,
 Boele wa'kaci ntawocwamaka,—
 "Oyofat'entoku, bonto f'eduku."

The *bokeng'a* is cut, the *jobong'a* is hit with a stick,
 No one enters the verandah of the *dji'kaci*,—
 The one who has wronged the peaceable one accuses him,
 although he is blameless.

(The *bokeng'a*, *jobong'a* and *dji'kaci* are three different kinds of fish; the two first are peaceable, the last is quarrelsome. The meaning is that a quarrelsome man attacks all and is best avoided.)

34. "Bokenge wa ngoya! ncikokela joi,
 Tososongo tonko ca-i?"

Fish of my mother! I have done you no harm,
 Why shake your head at me?

(Fish of my mother, means the speaker. It is equal to the exclamation Ah me.)

35. Boke nk'ifaka,
 Asesaki nyama l'akata,
 L'ola w'ifaka inkina.

Boke had no knife,
 He tore his meat with his fingers
 For lack of other knife.

(*Boke* is a mythical person. This proverb is said when a person is asked to lend the only thing of a kind he possesses, and is equivalent to a refusal.)

36. Bokila bolindola, banganju bataye.
The game has come home, but the greens are not cooked.
(When everything is ready for action, but delayed by the non-appearance of one person, or absence of one thing.)
37. Bokilo l'okanga nta buna.
Nkele nta yela mba.
Those related by marriage are not accustomed to fight,
The unripe palm grove yields no nuts.
(Those related by marriage look forward for returns of value. Persons interested together in future profits have a powerful incentive to keep the peace.)
38. Bokitasi w'angala ng'ol'a wani,
Ma ncici nga nda jembo.
The habitation of a scold is like the heat of the sun,
That of a quiet woman is like the coolness of the spring.
39. Bokoletaka ntakendaka l'onto.
The quarrelsome man does not go with others.
(The word *bokoletaka* means a combination of all quarrelsome and disagreeable traits. Such a person is shunned.)
40. Bokolo boki engambe l'onoju.
The old man's offer to the boy.
(This is not equivalent to "Hobson's choice," but is in the same class. The old man said to the boy "That thing you have there fits me; here, take this in trade." It is said when an undesired, but unescapable, exchange is offered.)
41. Bokonji mulumusu:—
Nkingo ea njoku efoong'elefo.
The ant hill is solidly banked up:—
An elephant's neck is not made to hang a bell from.
(Don't waste time in attacking a strong thing.)
42. Bokune oki nkema.
The younger brotherhood of the monkey.
(Large monkeys always precede: lesser ones follow. The expression is used when an older brother snubs you or when some other person demands a superior recognition.)
43. Bokwokwo aokyela jev'a, mbolo y'oca.
Bokwokwo wakes up with the sun.
(*Bokwokwo* is a morning bird. The meaning is "You are eternally summoning people before the judge with palavers: but you will find how it is yourself.")

44. Bokwokwo la jeva, engambe nk'okwokwo;
 Bokwokwo atefela, jeva ataye.
Bokwokwo and the sun, *bokwokwo* is up first;
Bokwokwo speaks, the sun has not yet come.
45. Bolando djicangafofi lotomo djim 'ele njwa.
Bolando was sent by the snake.
 (*Bolando* is a small, venomous insect. The proverb is equivalent to saying "the little fellow does this because his master sends him." An insignificant enemy may be egged on to wrong us, by a more important and serious one.)
46. Bolango wa kongontala.
 The *bolango* of the praise-seeker.
 (The *bolango* is the climbing-hoop, used in going up the palm-tree after the juice, which fermented becomes palm wine. It is a means of mounting. Reference to the climbing-hoop of the praise-seeker is equivalent to urging a man to attend strictly to business.)
47. Bolemo wa jeka bosila mpamba.
 The work that you are learning, exhausts or wearies you.
 (Perhaps, conversely, practice makes easy.)
48. Bolemo w'onto wa bakabaka.
 A man's trade never ends.
49. "Bombambo, endimola w'a paki,
 Okus'olo'ompompo.
 You *bombambo*, when the *djipaki* is taken away
 How will you stand the wind?
 (The *bombambo* is a large tree of soft wood; the *djipaki* is a well-grown strong tree. Said to one who depends upon another.)
50. Bombolo besise—
 "Baninga basisel'ilongo,
 Wosisel'elaji!"
 The *bombolo* halloas
 "Your brethren shout to their relatives;
 You shout to the empty forest."
 (The *bombolo* is a small animal, somewhat like a monkey: it cries a-o a-o. The term your brethren, means the other animals. The question appears addressed to the *bombolo*. The cries of other animals have some result; his halloa is vain, meets no response.)
51. "Bomongo'a nyama,
 W'a yuka y'esofa!"

He himself has meat

And you come with a basket of entrails!

(This is stronger than our "carrying coals to Newcastle.")

52. Bomongo w'eanza aokila toma:—

"Bofaiya, ambol'isungi, wocwa."

The man of the house fasts:—

You, visitor, pick up your lamp and go to bed.

(When a man and his wife quarrel, get out of the way.)

53. Bomongo w'ilaka aomel'asi,

Bafaiya bif'ongol'ekoko.

When the mourner for the dead, himself drinks water,

Visitors will pick up sugar-cane.

54. Bon'oa nsonso bokele,

Jasa nde, bonkan'okae.

The child of the hen is the egg,

What do you want, I am his relative.

(When a man has a palaver, his son has a right to take part in it.)

55. Bondenge boki njoku:—nk'omonkolo:—

Ayomele, boyokwe, k'ayomele, boyokwe.

The fruit that was eaten by the elephant: there was only one:—

He ate it, he dropped it, he ate it again, he dropped it.

(A man with one wife. This is used as a slur upon the christians at the mission.)

56. Bondenge aokwa ndanse.

Nko nyama e fokuluta.

The fruit that has fallen

There is no animal, but drags it about.

(All kick the man that is down. The proverb is also often applied to christian converts who make no angry reply.)

57. Bondenge jatana mboka:—

Bomoto ntayaka ntefeji ng'ey'ome.

Fruit lying in the highway:

A woman never has so strong a voice as her husband.

58. Boninga al'eka'nde,

Yakiliki yeke!

The brother who is always at home (in his own house)

Lies back at ease, in his strength.

(A man's house is his castle.)

59. Bojiko botongi, nk'engambe al'eko.

The loft (store-room) is tied strongly, when an elder is present.

(An elder gives stability to a gathering; a chaperone should be present.)

60. Boninga l'ona,
W'a tola ca'bota.

The friend who has a child,
You laugh at his generosity.

(You consider all other parents indulgent. Would some power the "giftie gie us.")

61. "Bonkonkomo! oamba nkasa, oamba nkombe,
Mpaoyale w'a na?"

Bonkonkomo! you bend this leaf, you bend that leaf,
Where will you stay.

(The *bonkonkomo* is an insect living in the forest. Troublesome fellow! you bother one, you bother another; to whom can you go?)

62. Bonoju asana nd'asafa,
Asela nyango l'ise 'olemo.

The child who plays in the mud
Makes trouble for his father and his mother.

64. Boseka nkoi, lokola nkingo.

The friendship of the leopard; a claw in your neck.

(Like nursing a serpent.)

65. Bosoombo nko lituku,
Bokombe nko lokole,
Boselenketa nko lela.

The leaf has no beauty,
The papyrus (reed) has no hollow,
The lizard has no path.

(The explanation given "a song of good cheer (of food)" means nothing to me. Perhaps the meaning is akin to Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. (?)

66. Bosai'omonkolo bondotaji mpota,
Beuma beyokoka l'alongo?

One finger gashed,
All the fingers are covered with blood.

(If one in a family does ill, all are smirched. Probably also, if one suffers, all are involved.)

67. Bosai'omonkolo nt'imolak'esiji nd'oca.
One finger does not get the lice out of the head.
68. Bosaka ca,
Nyam'efoso,
Ifak'ontuni.
The palm-oil is hot (for the chop-food)
The meat is in its skin,
The knife is dull.
(The meat must be taken out of the skin and cut up before the chop can be prepared. The meaning may be much the same as No. 36. It may perhaps also mean, that a good workman has his tools ready.)
69. Bosaso ondongol'efoso.
Your rebuke of noise causes greater noise.
(The remedy is worse than the disease.)
70. Boseka boki lokongoto la losankele.
The friendship of the ant and the caterpillar.
(Something like that of the lion and the lamb. When a caterpillar drops from a tree, the ant eats him.)
71. Bosoki w'ojiba bokita lobi ntando.
The humble brook, becomes tomorrow the great river.
72. "Botema! amby'okanela,
Onkaka ntaata."
The stomach stops wishing:
The giver has no more.
(It is necessary to be content with what you can get.)
73. Botema nganji, Jibaci yuwe.
The stomach is large, the purse small.
74. "Botema nkombe, jikata ingulu,—
Oleke y'onto, ike nko ndeya.
Nkombe's stomach, *ngulu's* hand
You eat from others, you feed none.
(*Nkombe* is a greedy and ravenous hawk. *Ngulu* is a little animal with sticky feet. The second line carries the full explanation.)
75. Botute 'a mpongo,
Eoka l'omenge,
Bolango ondumbi mbela nd'ikelele.

- The pestle gets the fat
 The mortar gets the leavings,
 The climbing-hoop is left on the verandah.
 (The plodding worker, through whose unobtrusive help a result is gained, is neglected and unrewarded.)
76. Bowa ntasambaka mbula.
 Mpela ntasambaka biani.
 Boseka ntasambaka aoi.
 The season of low water is not rainless,
 The season of flood is not sunless,
 Friendship is not without unkind words.
77. Bowa onga nk'ambula,
 Boseka onga nk'aoi.
 The season of low water is best without rain,
 Friendship is best without unkind words.
78. Boya w'itefya.
 The friendship of the mischief-maker.
 (It calls up the man who professes friendship, while he plots troubles.)
80. Ebimbakaka l'ekalemaka,—
 Oakaka nk'ebimbakaka.
 The wideawake man* and the sleepy fellow
 Who *has* is the wideawake one.
 (*Literally—the fellow whose feet are together.)
81. Ebusu efoleya walekele nkautau.
 Afterpains do not feed the woman who has borne children
 more than once.
 (You have eaten; I have not. I sit down to eat and you, from greed and stinginess, ask for more.)
82. "Ecima, cikala, oleki'engololo."
 High-water pools are left, the babbling brook obliterates
 them.
 (A wife prized and loved for some high quality, spoils all by talkativeness.)
83. Ecina ea weza w'esai.
 The quiet worker divides (apportions) with his fingers.
 (Said in sarcasm of persons who plan and systematize but do not accomplish.)
84. Efekele ey'otaka;—
 Bont 'o kinda olengeji elaji.

The stump of the *botaka*;—

A person stuffed with the loneliness of the deserted village.

(Said of the last survivor of a family line.)

85. Efoji aki nk'olombo;

Mpaka ey'onto aki nk'inkuni.

The old and withered leaves were once green sprouts;

The oldest man was once a babe.

86. Efoji ey'okengesano;—

Bosaji w'okali ntaofomwak'etaka.

The old and withered leaf has shrivelled:—

Your wife's workman should not be struck.

87. Efombo ecwa wato.

The well-appearing man is passing in a canoe.

(A man appears well and you exclaim over his fine condition; he is below sores and filth. "Distance lends enchantment.")

88. "Efomi, mela ntongi,"

"Botema, melak'atanda,"

Mpak'ey'onto ntasambak'iso'a wanya.

The *efomi* produces its sprouts,

The stomach produces its proper fruit,

The oldest of men is not without a grain of sense.

(Neither translation nor meaning are clear. Perhaps, everything has its use.)

89. "Ekei, kok'okwa,"

"O le l'ilongo kok'aoi."

Harden the salt, a broken pot,

Who has relatives, show forth deeds.

(After you have made your salt, you can break the pot. Do not destroy a bridge until you have passed over it. Keep your friends, by good action, as long as you are likely to need them.)

90. Ekeng'okwa. Baolek'ekeng'okwa.

Hard salt: they have passed over to hardened salt.

(When people have become fixed in one idea.)

91. Ekoko walala.

Knife; going and going.

(*Ekoko*, a large knife. The saying applies to a woman of value, who is *all the time* working; not entirely praiseworthy. Cf. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.)

92. Ekoni la limeko,
Botuci la lila.
The invalid and his groans,
The doctor and his food.
(A practical suggestion; the doctor should not be left without food.)
93. Ekota el'a nkolo ntaifomwak'oambo.
The aged person who has a master is not struck with a
whip.
94. El'etongo o nd'oseka.
The place of a brawl is with those who are friends.
(A man's enemies are those of his own house.)
95. Elewiji ea wij'oloko:—
Towoki o joi, nta townaka.
The news of the place by the *boloko*
We hear but do not see.
(No one ever goes there; the people are dangerous and quarrelsome.)
96. Emi'a we'ayokende,
Iyaya nkako,
Iselengani nk'ako.
You and I, friends, are going together,
There was scant generosity,
There was also a little deceit.
(Miserly treatment breeds deceit.)
97. Emi la'bong'efelo'atefela.
I and my leg* were talking.
(*My knee and thigh. This answer is made when someone asks what
you have said—your remark not being intended for him.)
98. Engambi l'ikute,
Jino j'ilongo.
The old man who is frugal
Is hated by his relatives.
99. Engambi nko'doka; Wete inkunya ileko.
The old man may not have a devil; but he is mean.
100. Enganyu ea yuka;—
Abwaka o nd'okongo wa nkolo.
The dilapidated basket spoils;—
It rots on the back of its master.

101. Enkweele aolemel'efekete.
Enkweele praises the stump.
 (*Enkweele* is the woodpecker, boring into a stump. His judgment regarding stumps need not be of the best.)
102. Entumola bona, nyango oka,
 Jidelo j'ona, nyang'ekeseji.
 You tease the child; the mother hears,
 The child's cry causes the mother sorrow.
103. Esang'osato, lofole lonyola yuka.
 The hand* that you carry under your arm; will one of the fingers† overfill a basket?
 (*Hand: i. e. a cluster of bananas side by side; †there no word means finger—one of the bananas in the cluster is meant. The meaning is—do little things overcome you, you who are able to do great ones.)
104. "Ensansabiengi! amby'omboma la bianga, em o kwekeji."
Ensansa! stop pricking me. I am the one who has been useful to you.
 (The *ensansa* is a nettle-bearing tree. You nettlesome fellow; don't hurt me: I am your friend.)
105. Esenga ca wanya;—
 Atumbak'ona ca, nk'of'okae.
 The fool burns the child;—
 But, wisely, not his own.
 (It is usually some one else's property that is lost or injured by the blunderer.)
106. Esombo ca nkosa ntayaka ng'oca.
 The bundle of *nkosa* never clumps up into a head.
 (*Nkosa* is a fibre used in net-making. The meaning is said to be wickedness is never gathered together; it is distributed evenly.)
107. Esongo mpampa l'olima!
 The nodding of the bare head causing praise, how much more that of one crowned with feathers.
 (Generosity, condescension, should be proportionate with rank.)
108. Esukulu aanga mpoko o nd'ekele.
 The rings of *esukulu's* eyes begin in the egg.
 (*Esukulu* is the owl.)
109. Esulu ndajiko, basi ndanse,—
 "We wecaki l'otefe ane!"

- The bog above, water below,
 You who pass, will you float on it?
 (The meaning does not seem uncertain: The explanation given is less clear than the proverb itself—a person's stomach may be evil; his mouth good; be careful, you will get your feet wet.)
110. Etuka ea mba ntakweka nko kol'ekasa
 Nkang'efoso ntaseka l'omi nko and'okale.
 The bunch of palm nuts never falls
 Without catching up some leaves.
 (So the chief of scolds never quarrels with her husband without involving a fellow-wife.)
111. Etumbe ntabelak'isano y'otofe.
 An invalid does not seek the game of hockey.
112. Fafa aontanga waji,
 "Baina'a nyama, lonkolonga."
 My father has called me a wife,
 The animal's tracks are plainly seen.
 (Whereas I considered myself a daughter, I am treated like a wife; before I had pleasant tasks, now I endure drudgery.)
113. "Fanza yuku nd'ilombe,
 Mpang'oat'ilongo."
 Hang up the basket in your house
 And you will have relatives.
 (Stay at home and you will have visitors.)
114. Ibw'a bienelo,
 Joso bienelo.
 Death or troubles: troubles first.
115. Ifulu akwena nk'osongo.
 When you have no weapon you see the birds.
116. Ifulu ilek'onkenka ntayetaka.
 The birds that eat the *bonkenka* do not come by your asking.
 (*Bonkenka*, a kind of fruit. It is not necessary to be called to your regular meals.)
117. Ifulu ntafondana nd'ajiko
 Afondaka o ndanse.
 The bird does not rot, up above,
 It rots down on the ground.
 (No matter how long a visitor stays, he goes home to die.)

118. Ifulu yotutama la jumbu.
The bird is approaching its nest.
119. Ik'akona; "Mbwa yotute!
Onjetela mbwa ansilole?"
"Iko is sick; dog, come and doctor him."
"Call the dog for me and let him finish me?"
(Iko is the porcupine: dogs kill porcupines. If you and I are always quarreling, when I get into another palaver I will hardly call you in to settle it.)
120. Ikasa nda ngonda;—"ombombe."
The little leaf in the forest,—hide me away.
(A needle in a haystack.)
121. "Ikasa, wuola mpaka,"
Lokend'a mpela wanya nk'oc'oso.
The little leaf asks the older one,
In the journey at floodtime wisdom is with the one going before.
(Ask advice of elders; get direction of those who have been over the road.)
122. Ikoke y'olanga;
Wa, wa, k'aoc'obunda lobi nd'otamb'okae.
The slowness of *bolanga*;
Carefully, carefully, tomorrow he gains the treetop.
(*Bolanga* is an edible caterpillar. Slow but sure.)
123. "Ikokila,—nk'ifak'ifaka?"
A bloody quarrel,—only a knife and a knife?
(Always fighting; unable to reason peaceably.)
124. Ikonongo la nk'ekila,
Ekila nde ilokwanaki.
A disagreement where neither takes advantage is all right,
The wrong is where one takes it today, the other tomorrow.
125. Ilaka etongo, nk'um'aleji.
The funeral is noisy, where there are many mourners.
127. "Ilemva jumba,—amby'ofat'okoji,
Bontoli wa ntatenya af'one."
Who is tired of the load should stop scolding the carry-band,
The carry-band that breaks is not this one.
(It is foolish to blame the faithful helper for what he has not done.)

129. Ilomb'amat'amato,
Nkamb'icwa la'e.
There are only women in the house;
Why (or how) has the *nkamba* disappeared?
(The *nkamba* is a fish that is tabued to women. Our native helper, himself a christian, parallels this by "There are only christians in the house; how has stealing occurred.)
130. Ilombe ya nsekola ntilongamak'etondo.
The house that is moved does not settle down evenly
again in its rafters.
131. Ilonga ndengela afondaka nyama,
"Lolango j'oninga, oyofela waj'oke mongo."
The game in a trap, not looked after, rots,
Love for another, you forget your own wife.
132. Ilong'eseke, em'a w'acike.
The relatives are dead of pestilence, you and I alone are
left.
(Are you going to divide what you have with strangers? Generous abroad, stingy at home.)
133. Ikomb'a nsoso;—ifolekan'awawa.
The chicken's little bill;—passes by no worm.
(The glutton eats all.)
134. Impamba y'omb'a y'ontoli.
The feebleness of the *y'omba* and the *y'ontoli*.
(They are two vines. They are really strong and tough. The reference is sarcastic. "Appearances are deceptive.")
135. Impoto iki bokangu.
The law that *bokangu* made.
(The *bokangu* is a bird; the law he made was that no bird should drop excrement in the river. This he then did himself. It were easier to tell ten what to do, than to be one of the ten to do it.)
136. Isano isana Balumbe, Nkundo ntayaka;
Nkundo te'asana, Balumbe baoya.
The Balumbe play games, no Nkundu go;
The Nkundu play, the Balumbe come.
(The Balumbe are the despised little Batua; the Nkundu consider themselves greatly superior to them.)
137. "Isan'a ntando, l'ofe'azi."
You play in the river, and do not know how to swim.

138. Ise ea ncikela,
Nyango ea nkaya,
Akolanga o mbile eki woat'ofambe.
Your adopted father, and the woman to whom you have
been given, love you only the day when you have
meat.
139. Iso'ma fio, nk'o leki webi.
We are all equal; no one exceeds another.
(Said in sarcasm; when due respect has not been shown.)
140. Isosongo iki'a mboka ea ndomba,
Toyangola'a nkolo y'akelekele.
The little stumbling-blocks in the market path,
The master's *toyangola* are made to bleed.
(*Toyangola*, a little fissured excrescence on the foot. Trifles and insignificant troubles cause pain.)
141. "Isungi ya ngoya,
Oncik'em'esanga,
Nkina cif'isama.
Firebrand of my mother,
See me into the uninhabited place,
Perhaps we shall hide.
(Said of a person who is always suggesting impracticable plans.)
142. "Isungi y'ontoni, onkokol'ojinga;
Lolango lofa mposa onkokol'efoso;
Mpokosekw'otema lo f'elango.
Firebrand of *bontoni* wood, stop smoking,
Love without desire, stop talking,
I shall not place my affections where there is no warmth
of love.
(*Bontoni* wood is yellow, undesirable as fire-wood, giving out much
smoke and no heat.)
143. "Itamba ikokosokoji ngombo,
Out'ojikota konji."
The little tree that saved you from the buffalo,
You turn and cut it for a post.
(Ingratitude. For some petty advantage you sacrifice those who have
done you a service.)

144. Itamba ile mpona ifulu ntakotamaka,
 Boyalo w'efoso bonoju ntokusaka.
 The tree full of stinging ants never has birds roosting on it;
 Children cannot stand the home where scolding is constant.
145. Itenel'imo nt'isambak'ofambe.
 There is no place without meat.
 (There are other places than yours; unless you treat me better I shall go elsewhere.)
146. Itoji te: "Tosiza,"
 Iluze te: "Mpak'icike."
Itoji says: "We are done,"
Iluze says: "Something remains."
 (They are birds eating palm-oil nuts. The application is to quarrels. After a palaver, one man says "well, it is past;" the other, "by the way, we have not settled this yet.")
147. "Ifaka nk'imonkolo, osomba nsoso!"
 Mpa osese nsoso la-e?"
 Only one knife, and you give that for a chicken!
 What will you carve the chicken with?
 ("As if you sold your cloth for thread with which to mend it.")
148. Iy'atumba ngonda,
 Ekokombe aseka!
 They are burning the forest,
 The dry grass laughs at it.
 (One laughs at another's misfortunes, not realizing that he is involved in the same ruin.)
149. Iyo bankelaki, njaki o ko;
 Nkajimole: "Woleki'obe!"
 When they swindled me, I kept silence;
 When I turned it on them: "oh, you're a sinner."
151. Iyonza njoku, lolola nguma;
 Ivaka ya nsasesa jembi.
Iyonza an elephant, *lolola* a python,
 With *jembi* as the knife to cut them.
 (The *iyonza* is the introductory present given to a guest; *lolola* is the secondary present. *Jembi* is a venomous snake. The meaning is, that since you came here there have been only palavers and troubles. Dr. Dye says he quotes this when people come to trouble him.)

152. "Njambo, nkokokimele lobi bafumba."

Notwithstanding all my long endurance, tomorrow I will pursue you with biting ants.

(*Njambo* corresponds to the introductory phrase. Patience ceases to be a virtue.)

153. Jelez'iyoko,

Bakusa nkoi,

Wiso w'ebulu embanda.

In the front yard murderers,

In the back yard leopards,

In the door of the inner room an *imbanda*.

(*Imbanda*, an evil spirit, much feared. There is danger everywhere around.)

154. Jembi asembi l'otondo,

Bon'ow'okulaka asembi l'ibwa.

Jembi stretched out on the rafter,

The chief's child stretched out on the floor—dead,

Cause great fear.

(*Jembi* is a venomous snake.)

155. Jemi jiki'ofaji.

The pregnancy of the *bofagi*.

(*Bofagi*, a kind of fish. The meaning is "still-born in miscarriage."

"Much ado over nothing," or "the mountain labored and produced a mouse" are approximate parallels.)

156. Jeva nda'kielo, nda'kielo.

The sun is in the rising, in the rising.

(This is but the beginning of the matter.)

157. Jibololo la Wengi baduka ntando,

"Looma Wengi, Jibololo acikale,

Jibololo aleki'oloko w'akambo."

Jibololo and *wengi* were swimming in the river,

Kill *wengi*, *jibololo* is left,

Jibololo comes out ahead in the contest.

(*Jibololo* is a fish with scales; *wengi* is the electric fish. The good and the bad are together; the bad is killed, the good remains.

Truth is mighty and will prevail, is perhaps analogous.)

158. Jibongi nta ongak'ontumbekela.

It never does to have another burn the brush-heap for you.

(If you want a thing well done, do it yourself.)

159. Jibuka la Ngila bayaki,
Ngila ayokend'oseka,
Nd'ende la mponde.
The gray monkey and the black monkey came from same town,
The black monkey made friends with the white-faced one.
(Desertion of old friends for new.)
160. Jikafo nd'otema; Jibaci 'ondenge.
Presents from the stomach; ability small.
(Your impulses are generous: your achievements limited.)
161. Jikafo nta alak'etondo.
The presents are not by looking at the rafters.
(At a distribution of gifts, it is well to look out for your share.)
162. Jiso aolela; Wete jolo aofola.
When the eyes have tears, the nose runs.
163. "Jiso wengi, botemaindenge;
Oleki o y'onto, ike nt'okafaka."
Your eye is like the electric fish;
Your stomach urges you on.
(The electric fish is everywhere. The meaning is you are always present to eat with others but you never share with them.)
164. Jituk'a ntela l'ain'okai.
The delight of bananas; the teeth are on edge.
(There is always some flaw in the cloth.)

NTUMBA PROVERBS.

1. How can you drink its soup if you eat not its flesh?
2. Poor at home, in another town you make a show of being rich.
3. A palaver that is not yours, best to be silent.
4. No person goes up and down a place without cause.
5. Make no friendship with a disobedient man.
6. A woman may say "I do not eat this," when she eats a thing just like it.
7. A bird without a mother feeds itself by its own mouth.
8. A man who is whole fits better for a dance than a lame man.
9. You are short; all people are not made of the same height.
10. Unkind father loves his child when the mother is present.
11. A selfish man likes others to give him their things.

12. If I have a little fever and no one salutes me, I will not be saluted by anyone when a great fever comes.
13. If you did not get sick when you were young, you are sure to get sick when old.
14. A dispute between two friends, though the palaver finishes, they will have a thought of it in their minds.
15. Nobody can walk strongly if he is unwell.
16. A person who is invited for food, if he fails nobody is to blame.
17. You cannot say a thing without hearing it.
18. You show kindness to a person who hates you, unkindness to one who loves you.
19. Unkind person is not helped when sick.
20. You are loved when you have money.
21. If your mother did know how to make pots, do not despise others.
22. Work hard, when you get the money your whole family will join you.
23. A motherless child receives no presents.
24. A multitude of people may complain of hunger, but you can never tell if one has eaten.
25. Do not hate other people as long as they have their own food, but hate your own relatives and you will avoid trouble.
26. A kind man often gets into trouble.
27. A plantain near the roadside does not flourish; every passer plucks from it.
28. A hateful man does not feel happy.
29. You steal when hungry. When you get more than you want you are not able to eat it all.
30. A hawk does not know how to fish, but when it finds a dead fish people chase it.
31. You may dislike to strike a boy, but he himself thinks he is strong enough.
32. Bad *ngola* does not return to him who sells it.
33. A multitude talk of something; another joins them, but he does not know the beginning.
34. Though you have relatives, a quarrel may separate you from them.

35. When it is other peoples' palaver you laugh; but when it is your own you are silent.
36. A friendship is as hard as wood while things are pleasant; but as weak as a cord when trouble comes.
37. While two persons are rich they visit and walk together, but if one becomes poor or sick the other passes his house.
38. Your cloth is worn because there is no money.
39. When you are at home nothing happens, but when you are away something happens.
40. A family's palaver is kept silent; that of others is displayed.
41. If you are a great eater, work for yourself.
42. Do not love a person for his beauty; you do not know his ways.
43. Do not fear a person for his bigness; when you seize him he is as weak as a leaf.
44. A good day does not last long.

Most of the proverbs in this list are immediately understood. A few call for a word of comment or explanation. Numbers 1 and 6 relate to food tabus, of which there are many among the Congo peoples. By such tabus a person is debarred from the eating of one or another kind of food, temporarily or permanently. The world over, much ingenuity is shown in the effort to escape the disagreeable consequences of a law, while observing the letter. These proverbs are aimed at such subterfuges. The spirit and intent of the prohibition is as truly broken by drinking soup made from an animal as by eating its actually forbidden flesh. Proverbs 10 and 23 mean much more in a polygamous community than they would among ourselves. Each wife of a polygamous husband has her own house; each is jealous for her own children. A large share of the quarrels in African villages grow out of difficulties between children of different wives. The man who desires a happy atmosphere in his home life is wise to treat the children of any one of his wives with notable affection, while their mother is near. The falling mentioned in 16 is due to lack of strength from need of food. A man at another's table should eat all he can: if he fails to do so, he only is to blame. 17: Practically equivalent are our "chickens come home to roost," and "a bad penny always turns up." Numbers 22, 25, 26 and

27 are of one piece. It does not pay for a man to be thrifty and saving unless he, at the same time, suppresses his inclinations toward generosity and hospitality. The man who *has* will be preyed upon as long as his hoard lasts. The man easily accessible (the plantain near the roadside), who readily recognizes the claims of blood, is sure to be stripped. 24 is the cry wrung from the man who receives constant appeals for help. Everyone is ready to take what he can get; no one cries enough. Complaint is common; the expression of satisfaction rare. If you tell a man how well off you are, he will cease to give you favors—he may even become a drain. In number 30 we find that in Africa, as elsewhere, they pounce upon the petty and miserable offender; the great criminal escapes. 31: No matter how weak and insignificant the attack, nor how natural good-nature may lead you to overlook assault, vigorously repel every assailant. 32: *Ngola* is the ground camwood, of a fine red color, which is used to smear the body. The meaning appears to be that, as it is bought for immediate use and its return involves trouble and delay, the quality will be overlooked.

BOPOTO PROVERBS.

1. Mai ntse muta ko likolo.
Water below but oil on the top.
(To speak fair before one's face but evil behind one's back.)
2. Lua mbanje la monoko mw'ao mene.
Fish for your own mouth.
(Don't expect to eat what others have worked to obtain.)
3. Mobuka nkoni asamala nkbengu.
The woodcutter sleeps with small sticks.
(The one who boasts of his woodcutting has to sleep by a fire of small sticks.)
4. Moduka loma asama luga.
The man of possessions sleeps hungry.
(The rich man has to leave all when he dies.)
5. Nga njali fa momongo wa itoko, altemeli mofembo.
I am the owner of the mat and sleep on the hem.

6. Boliko yatona inde lifano, afalala.
The river rejects advice and increases in size.
(The river refuses islands and spreads abroad. A man refuses advice and spoils his work.)
7. Mokongolo moluki molei.
The one who searches eats.
8. Wafela nsembe, wacikala la lofei.
You had a fish; you are left with the smell.
(The fish has been stolen.)
9. Maundu mawale motango lisanga.
Two parties, the same story.
(The two parties in a quarrel have not the same story.)
10. Ebuba likolo mai maiki ntse.
Rushes on top, water below.
11. Ao fa ifula ngafa litale.
You a bird; I a stone.
(In pursuit, the pursuer if outrun cries, "You are a bird, go ahead; I am a stone.")
12. Mpota ya mbwa lako mososi.
The sore of a dog no cleanser.
(A person without helpers.)
13. Wabunga nduka, wale minganga.
You don't know how to fish; you must eat fishtails.
14. Toomanaka anyango.
Let us kill one another's mothers.
(Two are eating together. One says, "Let us eat your food first." The other retorts with the proverb, suggesting that when one portion is eaten the other will move off and not share his food.)
15. Ntula awei, ilenge bamole mafefe.
The fish is dead, children have eaten his tender body.
(The *ntula* is difficult to kill and often attacks, but the flesh is very tender. When a strong man is absent children can spoil his goods.)
16. Motolitoli mosei mwaebanga, kale la sango.
Kalenda eseka, iyosila inde, koi toke.
A selfish or greedy person eats with his father; looks at his friend; when finished, says "Friend, let us go."
(A person accepting food from his father and offering none to his friend who is with him. This refrain is sung in derision.)

1910 Hollis Taveta.pdf

JOURNAL OF THE AFRICAN SOCIETY

VOL. IX. NO. XXXV.

APRIL, 1910

NOTE.—There are many subjects in Africa, such as Racial Characteristics, Political and Industrial Conditions, Labour, Disease, Currency, Banking, Education, and so on, about which information is imperfect and opinion divided. On none of these complicated and difficult questions has Science said the last word. Under these circumstances it has been considered best to allow those competent to form an opinion to express freely in this Journal the conclusions at which they themselves have arrived. *It must be clearly understood that the object of the Journal is to gather information, and that each writer must be held responsible for his own views.*

AN EXPLORATION IN CENTRAL EQUATORIAL AFRICA ¹

I PROPOSE this evening to give you a short account of the work of the British Section of the Uganda-Congo Boundary Commission in the western frontier districts of the Uganda Protectorate, during the years 1907 and 1908.

The majority of the magic lantern slides have been prepared from photographs taken by the British officers, and I have also largely used their reports and notes in the preparation of this paper. I desire to express my indebtedness to each of them. I will first relate very briefly the incidents which led to the despatch of the joint Commission by the British and Congolese Government and then describe to you our journey.

In 1894 the Government signed an agreement with the Congolese recognising the 30th Meridian East of Greenwich as the Eastern limit of the Independent State of the Congo. At that time it was believed that the Meridian was some 12 or 13

¹ This paper was read by Major Bright at a meeting of the Society on the 18th March, 1910. For report of the proceedings on this occasion see p. 311.

TAVETA SAYINGS AND PROVERBS

[THE Taveta (or Tuweta) people, among whom Mr. Hollis has collected the following proverbs and sayings, are to be found in the southern part of the British East Africa Protectorate, in a district adjoining the German border. This district, about 100 miles square, lies at the foot of Kilimanjaro, on the south-east, and is traversed by the River Luma. There is a delightful description of it by Sir Harry Johnston, who visited them in 1884 (*Kilimanjaro Expedition* pp. 74-80, 204-220 and elsewhere; the people are discussed on pp. 432-436). They appear to number some 4,000 souls, and to be of mixed Hamite and Bantu origin. According to their own traditions, they cannot have been settled in their present abodes above three hundred years, and they trace their descent from stray immigrants of various tribes: Wakamba, Wazigula, Wakwafi (Masai) and others. Sir Harry Johnston says that they are "of fair height, some of the men being both tall and robust, and attaining occasionally six feet. . . . Their figures are often models of symmetry and grace." He reckons them among the pleasantest people he ever met in Africa. They also "bear an excellent reputation among the coast traders for honesty and friendliness." Their language "offers some very curious features and retains a number of archaic words in its vocabulary." Sir Harry places it about midway between Kikamba and Kičaga (Kichaga).

The last-named is the language of the "Wačaga," whom the same authority describes as inhabiting "all but the northern flanks" of Kilimanjaro. It is, however, a mistake to speak of them as a single tribe, for they appear to have originated in the same way as the Wataveta, and to have no name for themselves except *wandu wa mndeni* (*mundeni*)

"the people of the gardens." (Mr. Hollis says that Taveta, or Tuweta, really means "the plains"—so that Wataveta seems to be only a collective designation for "dwellers on the level"). The name Chaga or Jaga (*Dschagga* in German spelling) was given to them by the Coast men. The Rev. J. Raum, in the Introduction to his Grammar of this language, says that their latest immigration can scarcely have taken place more than two hundred years ago.

The customs of the Wataveta present many curious points, for which the reader is referred to Sir Harry Johnston's book already quoted, and to a valuable paper by Mr. Hollis which appeared in the first number of this *Journal* (October, 1901, pp. 98-125). The system by which the men of the tribe are divided into classes called "ages" (each comprising those born within the same period of about fifteen years) is an old and universal Bantu institution which elsewhere exists in various stages of development or decay, some of its characteristic features being obscured or entirely forgotten. Thus, *e.g.*, among the Zulus, it has been wrongly described as a system of military organizations invented by Tshaka.

All African languages abound in proverbs, which are frequently racy and humorous. We are greatly indebted to Mr. Hollis for this collection, which may be compared with the Swahili ones in Mr. Taylor's *African Aphorisms*, or the hundred Chaga sayings given in the grammar above-mentioned, which is discussed elsewhere in these pages.—ED.]

1. *Akasomwa mughenji wako ni murwa wa kughu, nawe ukasomwa ni washindiko, ngola ini washindiko.*

If your companion's foot is pierced by a thorn, and if your buttocks are pierced (as well), take out first of all (the one) from your buttocks. (Cf. the Masai proverb: *Miingar ol-paashe le-lighae, nipal ol-lino*, Do not repair another man's fence until you have seen to your own. "Charity begins at home.").

2. *Akuenja owiwi niye wako.*

He who shaves you badly is yours (brings you good luck). (It is considered unlucky amongst the Taveta if a barber does not draw a little blood when shaving the head.)

3. *Arata ina iwindi teihoa.*

The wound which has a (piece of) bone (in it) will not heal. (If you do not root out everything connected with an evil, you will not cure the evil.)

4. *Esikie mbeho niye esongerira moto.*

It is he who feels cold that approaches the fire. (A person does not do a thing for no reason at all. If something uncommon occurs, search for a cause.)

5. *Ghesha ndiwa mti.*

Try the depth of the pond with a pole. (Before attempting to cross a pond see how deep the water is.)

Also: *Usirighe mundu usimudawa.*

Do not abuse a man you have not beaten.

Also: *Usiwekije njoe mwagho na mwana wakwe.*

Don't place a load on (the back of) a donkey that has a foal. (A donkey that has a foal will pay so much attention to its foal that it will be useless as a beast of burden. "Look before you leap.")

6. *Gura muhandi kifumbo.*

Seize the handle of the sword.

Also: *Ukakoma nyoka, mkome na kamwe.*

If you kill a snake, kill it entirely. ("Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.")

7. *Handu hewetie zowu na mwana ewetia.*

The place that the (cow) elephant has passed over its calf will pass over (as well). (A child follows in the footsteps of its parent.)

8. *Ibau liiya na listiya, iwiwi ni listiya.*

(Of) The hyena that howls and that does not howl, the bad one is the one that does not howl. (It is better to fight a brave and straightforward enemy than one that is cowardly and underhand.)

9. *Ibau teliwe kuwisa.*

A hyena does not hide itself completely. (A hyena [or a criminal] can hide for a time but eventually he will be captured and killed. Cf. the Masai proverb: *Meiyopoo ol-ōwaru ol-kujita*, The grass does not cover the wild beast. "Murder will out.")

10. *Ideghe imwe likaremwa kuiya teheshigha kucha.*

If one bird ceases singing the dawn will not stop. (The

world will not come to an end because one bird ceases singing or because one man dies. "There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it.")

11. *Ideghe ituku likuria miwvi handu hamwe.*

On a foolish bird the arrows are finished in one place. (A wise man takes warning on the approach of danger.)

12. *Idio la mwana mkiwa lijimisha moto.*

The banana of the poor child extinguishes the fire. (The banana is the chief food of the Taveta. If the fire goes out whilst the children are roasting their bananas, the poor child will be blamed for extinguishing it. "Give a dog a bad name and hang him.")

13. *Ikyo tekikomanya nguku na kitagha.*

These (things) do not make the fowl and the wild cat fight. (This is equivalent to saying: "Don't worry over petty annoyances.")

14. *Iraro la zowu liyaiwa ni suni.*

The elephant's bed is slept on by the gazelle. (When an elephant quits the sleeping place he has prepared for himself, the gazelle takes up his abode in it and so avoids the necessity of having to make a fresh one. With human beings it is the same. When a rich man leaves his dwelling as no longer suitable for him, a poor man is only too glad to take up his residence there.)

15. *Iwato lifumie lafuma.*

A leg which has gone out has gone out. (A commencement, however small, is better than no commencement at all.)

16. *Iye ni ilala la soke.*

He is like beeswax. (He is clever at everything—a good, all-round man.)

17. *Kaa ya mfole teiwa.*

The town of the coward is not cried in. (If a man is a coward people do not go to his house to drink or enjoy themselves, and the coward consequently does not come to harm. This is somewhat equivalent to: "He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day.")

18. *Kabau kakakunda kukula tekesowa mihoromie.*

If a small hyena wishes to eat you he does not miss (a chance of) growling at you. (If a person wishes to do anything he must make the most of his opportunities.)

19. *Kionda tekinyukia mwenye.*

The ulcer does not stink to the owner.

("O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oorsels as ithers see us.")

20. *Kisieha ni isikio.*

What does not grow is the ear. (A saying used by small children to big children if the latter are bullying them. It means "In course of time I shall grow as big as you, when I shall pay you back.")

21. *Kisimefwa usitaghe.*

Do not abandon (hope) before you die. ("While there is life there is hope.")

22. *Kisitorana ni nduwi.*

(What) do not meet together are the hills. (A favourite saying when people part company. Cf. the Masai proverb: *Il-doinyo lemetumo*, Mountains do not meet, and the Turkish proverb, Mountain does not meet mountain, but man meets man.)

23. *Kuima siko kulako.*

To cultivate is not to eat.

24. *Kukengwa na kusowa, keba kukengwa.*

To be cheated or to lose (altogether), it is better to be cheated. (It is better to lose a part than the whole. "Make the best of a bad job.")

25. *Kyaingia fua, chasaingia momoni.*

It entered (by) the nose, it did not enter by the mouth. (This is somewhat like talking about entering by the back door. What was wanted had been obtained, though the method of obtaining it was not the usual one.)

26. *Lako ni lako na likabajika mutwi.*

Thine is thine until it splits thy head. (Said to a parent whose offspring causes trouble.)

27. *Lusighi luoho kaa tolusowa kindu luchunga.*

The cord which is in the hut does not fail to fasten. (Everything has its use.)

28. *Madeghe meengi ni makanga saka.*

Many birds are the scare of the wilderness. (One bird might be afraid to go into the wilderness alone, but several birds would not be scared.)

Also: *Mkono 'mwe touŋgola nda mutwini.*

One hand will not take out a louse from the head. (Cf. the Swahili and Masai proverbs: *Kidole kimoja hakivundi tawa* and *Medany ol-kimōjino ōbo el-lashei*, One finger does not break a louse. "The necessity of joint action" or "Union is strength.")

29. *Madeghe meeri mena njama.*

Two birds have council. ("Two are company and three are none.")

30. *Mavi usila uimia kini nguku.*

Dirt which you do not eat (yourself) do not refuse to the fowls. (Cf. the Swahili proverb: *Mavi usiyoyala waya-wingiyani kuku?* From the dirt you do not eat, why do you drive the fowls?)

Also: *Usioke nyoka iasa isila.*

Do not behave like a snake that kills things without eating them. ("The dog in the manger.")

31. *Mbeu ndongo ikumbiwa na teri.*

A little seed is increased by sand. (A small tribe can be made to appear big by allowing other people to come and reside in their midst. The Taveta were formerly a very insignificant tribe, but by permitting strangers to take up their abode in their country they have become more important.)

32. *Mbogho ndase inywa iria lakwe mwenye.*

A sick buffalo drinks (at) its own pond. (Said when reference is made to a man who stands aloof from his fellows. Cf. the Masai proverb: *Erishunye anaa en-güa o-'sighiria ōbo*, He separates himself like a sick donkey.)

33. *Mbojo mmwe yaizuja mbinda.*

One bean has filled the basket. (If a bean is planted and bears, the fruit will in course of time fill a basket. Likewise with a man, if he has children and his descendants increase in number, the offspring of that man will eventually form a tribe.)

34. *Mbombe ihunduka ha mee.*

Water will return to its mother. (People may pay a visit to another village or country but they will return home again, just as a river will flow into the sea.)

Also: *Handu hebaike ijegho tehetana na lumi.*

The tongue does not leave alone the place (in the gum)

where the tooth came from. (Cf. the Masai proverb : *Mepwo 'L-ōtimi te-'n-gop enye*, Baboons do not go far away from their homes. "*Cælum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.*")

35. *Mbombe teiwoa ula musi yatahiwa.*

Water does not go bad the day it is drawn. (A crime is not committed without forethought. Said of a person who has committed a crime when extenuating circumstances are urged on his behalf.)

36. *Mbombe ya hae teiomera nyungu yoho motoni.*

Water far away does not help the pot on the fire.

37. *Mbora wedi anyuka fua.*

A beautiful girl (but) she stinks (in the) nostrils. (Small matters often spoil great concerns.)

38. *Mbuji isara tetbighwa musenge.*

A goat which runs is not beaten. (Do not drive a person who is willing. Cf. the Swahili proverb : *Mtii huambilika*, The person that obeys is not spoken to.)

39. *Mbuji teisimba kamwe.*

A (mad) goat is not seized with madness once (only). (Cf. the Swahili proverb : *Mwivi haibi marra moja tu*, A thief does not steal once only.)

40. *Mfee akasua mwana, hami mcheku nise?*

If the parent refuses the child, am I a midwife? (If the relations refuse to look after a person, who will do so?)

41. *Mgheni wedi naze akiye wenye kaa.*

A good stranger comes and heals the inhabitants of the village. (If you are enjoying anybody's hospitality, it is your duty to assist your host in every way you can.)

42. *Mkela muma muyoe igoshi.*

Look (ye) at the nape of the neck of the breaker of oaths. (The Taveta slaughter their oxen like the Masai by stabbing them in the nape of the neck. This proverb is equivalent to saying : Do not attempt to punish a man who breaks his promise; be content to wait [regard the nape of his neck], for in time you will witness the untimely end that will overtake him.)

43. *Mkomwa ni mbogho ni mkomwa ni mburia.*

He who is killed by a buffalo is he who is killed by a rhinoceros.

Also : *Mkomwa ni ndima ni mkomwa ni kula.*

He who is killed by work is he who is killed by eating. (If a man dies, it does not matter how he dies, whether he is killed by a buffalo or by a rhinoceros, or whether he kills himself by overworking or by overeating.)

44. *Momo wedi ufigola sown mtemeni.*

Good words turn the elephants out of the plantation. ("A soft answer turneth away wrath.")

45. *Mundu ena ngingo teesowa kiraro.*

A man who owns a mat does not fail to find a sleeping place. (A rich man can always get what he wants.)

46. *Mundu etue no idiwa niye etisiwe sandu ibigha.*

The man who is in a pond is he who knows how (the waves) strike. (The man on the spot is the best judge.)

47. *Muwvi wedi touikaa na isyaka.*

A fine arrow does not remain in the quiver. (A well-made arrow is the first to be selected by a hunter. Similarly a trusted person is selected for a dangerous mission. "The best always die first.")

48. *Mwana eiya muno tedawiwe.*

The child that weeps bitterly has not been beaten. (The grief of a person who has a great sorrow to bear is more than that of a person who has only been flogged. Try and get at the bottom of everything.)

49. *Ndwari ya mughenji teiyaja ungi kiawi.*

One man's sickness does not affect another man's sleep.

50. *Ngingi sha yaseja ya kae.*

The new cudgel has lowered the old one. ("Every dog has his day." "New brooms sweep clean.")

51. *Ngondo ina kimba teichiliwa, tiwe kubaa.*

The war which has a corpse is not judged and is not broken. (If a man is killed in cold blood the murderer is executed or blood money has to be paid, but if a man is killed in war nobody is held responsible.)

52. *Ngoswe ya shighati yafigola ya kaa.*

The rat of the wood has driven out (the rat) of the house. (Beware of adopting a stranger.)

53. *Nikaremwa kukwed, siremwa kuchochoma.*

If climbing over something beats me, getting through it will not beat me. ("Where there is a will, there is a way.")

54. *Nyoka kukomwa ni kutonga njenye.*

For a snake to be killed is to go alone. (It is better to have anybody for a companion than no companion at all.)

55. *Nyumba ikasha na mwenye eota.*

If a house is burnt the owner warms himself by a fire. (A Taveta hut is made of poles and grass. In the event of one being burnt, the grass will be consumed but the poles will only be charred. The owner will have the consolation of knowing that though he must go to the trouble of building another hut he will have sufficient fire-wood to last him some time. "'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good.")

56. *Nyungu ya mawindi, ni mawindi meibaja.*

It is the bones which break the cooking pot in which bones are cooked. (It is the bad thoughts in a man's heart which spoil a man.)

57. *Sarigha kuehija lukembe ni kukulemalema.*

The impala antelope to grow (its) horns is to take care of itself. (The impala antelope has very beautiful horns, which take a long time to grow to their full length. The meaning implied here is that if a boy or a man does not lead a careful life, he will not make old bones.)

58. *Shindaki 'mwe iwoja nyama yose.*

One fly spoils all the meat. (One man can corrupt a whole village.)

59. *Suke ya ungi teifinikira shindiko.*

A borrowed cloth does not cover the buttocks.

Also: *Suke ya mughenji teiwe kufugaria.*

It is not meet to show off in your companion's garment. ("Pride comes before a fall.")

60. *Teri ya kidombo teiliwa.*

Sand (which is used) for sitting on is not eaten. (A person will not get food by sitting down: he must work if he wishes to eat.)

61. *Teta mboha amu na ngungu ina masikio.*

Speak low for the wind has ears. ("Walls have ears.")

62. *Ukakunda kukanya wandu, gura wa nyuma.*

If you wish to settle a dispute between (two) people, seize

the last one. (The last one here represents the stronger of two combatants as he would be the last to run away. As he might resent the peacemaker's interference, it would be wise to secure him before attempting to settle the dispute. If you are about to enter on a dangerous undertaking, take every precaution that may be necessary.)

63. *Ukarighwa, gumiria we.*

If you are abused, bear it (in silence).

64. *Ukashota misenge miiri, 'mwe uomia.*

If you put two sticks in the fire, one will be burnt. ("You can only do one thing at a time.")

65. *Ukasikia Meeee, usighambe, Ete nizore.*

If you hear a goat bleat, do not say, Bring it that I may buy it.

Also: *Usilangwe ni uwedi wa ijani la themba.*

Do not covet the beauty of the maize cob cover.

Also: *Usilangwe ngure kuneñguna.*

Do not covet the beauty of the budding. ("Buy a pig in a poke.")

66. *Ukasowa ñgombe usioghe mani.*

Because you lack an ox, do not bewitch the grass.

Also: *Kijo kiliwa ni kingi.*

(One) Food is eaten by another (food).

Also: *Momo 'mwe touchama mawa.*

One mouth does not taste beer. (If you have food or drink share it with another, so that when you have nothing someone may share his food or drink with you. "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.")

67. *Ukatufa mate, temehundukia momoni.*

If you spit, the saliva does not return to the mouth.

Also: *Mate memijiwe, mamijwa.*

Saliva which has been swallowed has been swallowed. ("Spilt milk.")

68. *Usidaie muswa na mwanje.*

Do not despise the gruel in the plate. (Do not jump at conclusions.)

69. *Usihiwe hesimaswa.*

Do not steal before sunset. (Do not be in a hurry to do wrong: consider the consequences well first.)

70. *Usile ukiwira momo si sa nguku.*

Do not eat and wipe your mouth below (on the ground) like a fowl. (If a person gives you food do not say you picked it up. Acknowledge anything that is done for you.)

71. *Usimela si chako cho.*

Before eating (something) it is not yours. ("There is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip.")

72. *Usiseke kirema usimekua.*

Do not laugh at a defect before you become old. (Do not ridicule the infirmities of others.)

73. *Uzoka usigere maasha mweteni.*

If you travel do not soak the sugar-cane cuttings in the river. (Before planting sugar-cane cuttings it is customary to soak them for a few days. If a person were going away from home, it would be foolish for him to put them in water, as they would be worthless by the time he returned. Similarly a person should not start a task that he cannot carry through.)

74. *Wagera munyu.*

You have put in some salt. (Said to a person who has not told the simple truth.)

75. *Wakusha mbombe ikaoka mawee.*

You have shaken the water (until) it has become milk. (Said to a person who exaggerates.)

76. *Wakwea guni na viratu?*

Have you climbed on the roof with sandals on? (If a person climbs on to the roof of his hut, he does not put on his sandals, otherwise he will probably slip. The meaning here is "Have you made a mistake?" or "Have you reckoned without your host?")

77. *Washigha maroghwa ukagura mughuwa.*

You have left the green covering of the sugar-cane and taken the sugar-cane. (Said to a successful man.)

78. *Wasua mughuwa ukala igirisha.*

You have refused the sugar-cane and you have eaten the top part. ("A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.")

79. *Zinya ibaa mkono.*

Force breaks the hand. (Whatever you do, do quietly, and not with an outburst of display.)

80. *Zowu kulu miera ni kukuidima.*

(For) An elephant to eat acacia trees is to be temperate. (It is nothing for an elephant to eat acacia trees, but it would be a serious task for a smaller animal. "Do not try to do more than you are able.")

81. *Zowu teiemeiwa ni ijegho lakwe.*

An elephant is not overcome by his tusks.¹

A. C. HOLLIS.

*Secretary for Native Affairs,
East Africa Protectorate.*

¹ We may compare with the above some of the Chaga and Chasu (Pare) proverbs collected by Messrs. Raum and Kotz.

No. 8 conveys much the same idea as the Chasu *Kajongo hakumba niko habemus mken*, "It is the silent caterpillar that destroys the crops." No. 44 is found almost word for word in Chaga: *Olimi ucha nyi losama njefu mdemish*. A saying to the same effect is: *Mododa necha nelem bure sanga-fo*. "He who speaks pleasantly has never yet lacked land" (or, "a country"—it seems to be said of a chief who takes pains to conciliate his subjects). No. 67 is found in Chaga as *Mara (=mare) mapuche hewa ivikiryu dumbunyi-fo*. No. 59 is paralleled in *Nguwo jeomba jesuru macha-fo*. "A garment asked for (obtained by begging) does not satisfy one"—cf. the Scottish saying, "A g'ien morsel's soon eaten." Some further Chaga examples are:—

"The hammer missed the iron and struck the stone."

"The medicine of baboons is looking behind them."

"Do not say to the wild beast 'Help me nurse my child.'"

"You provoke the driver-ants, and yet you have no fuel" (to light a fire for getting rid of them).—Ed.

1910 Theal Xhosa.pdf

THE
YELLOW AND DARK-SKINNED
PEOPLE OF AFRICA SOUTH
OF THE ZAMBESI

A DESCRIPTION OF THE BUSHMEN, THE HOTTENTOTS, AND
PARTICULARLY THE BANTU, WITH FIFTEEN PLATES
AND NUMEROUS FOLKLORE TALES OF THESE
DIFFERENT PEOPLE

BY
GEORGE McCALL THEAL, LITT.D., LL.D.

LONDON
SWAN SONNENSCHN & CO., LTD.
25, HIGH STREET, BLOOMSBURY
1910

in other dialects being often changed by the Basuto to *r*, and the noun requiring a vowel ending. How can these facts be explained? As to the last, the identity of words is probably accidental. The Barimo are the spirits of the dead, Baalim are forms of the sun god. The meaning is thus not the same. Then Barimo is found only in a highly specialised dialect of the Bantu language, and before any certainty can be arrived at, it will be indispensable to know what the primitive form was, that is the form in use by the original conquering band.

As for the numerous words with roots common to many languages, the only explanation that can be offered seems to be this. Taking the human species as of one origin, no matter where that origin may have been, there must have been a time, however remote, when all mankind, then a small community, used the same language. That language was probably very limited in words. Then a division of the people took place; when some migrated in one direction, some in another. Each section added new words to the old vocabulary to express new ideas, and each put the words together to form sentences in a different manner. Very soon there would be many distinct languages, varying from each other not only in the words used, but in grammatical construction. But is it not allowable to suppose that the original words common to mankind would be retained by all to express the same meanings, and that though modified and distorted, abraded in some instances, enlarged in others, many of these primitive words may have come down even to the present day in such a form that their identity can be recognised by diligent observation? Is it not possible at least that when a Zulu or a Xosa says *ngena* and an Englishman says *enter*, the *en* in both instances is a relic of a far-off age; when a little group of human beings, perhaps in Southern Asia, perhaps in some land now buried beneath the ocean waves, could look around in every direction without seeing others of their kind, and could claim the whole world as their own?

Many of the proverbs in common use among all sections of the Bantu conveyed excellent practical lessons of prudence

and wisdom. The following are a few of those collected by the writer when residing with the Xosas, and they might be extended to fill many pages:—

A brand burns him who stirs it up, equivalent to our English one Let sleeping dogs lie.

Like the marriage feast of Mapasa, used to denote anything unusually grand. The marriage festivities of one of the ancients, Mapasa by name, are said to have been carried on for a whole year.

Misfortune of soup made of shanks and feet, applied to any person who never does well, but is always getting into trouble. The kind of soup spoken of is very lightly esteemed.

One fly does not provide for another, a saying of the industrious to the idle, meaning that each should work for himself as the flies do.

Bakuba is far away, no person ever reached it. Bakuba is an ideal country. This proverb is used as a warning against undue ambition, or as advice to be content with that which is within reach. It is equivalent to our English saying It is no use building castles in the air.

They have slaughtered at Kukwane, where much meat is obtainable. According to tradition, there was once a very rich chief who lived at Kukwane, and who entertained strangers more liberally than any who went before or who came after him. This proverb is used to such persons as ask too much from others, as if to say: It was only at Kukwane that such expectations were realised.

It is not every one who is a son of Gaika. Gaika was at the beginning of the nineteenth century the most powerful chief west of the Kei. This proverb signifies that all are not equally fortunate.

I rejoice that Kolomba's mother is dead. The mother of Kolomba was, according to tradition, a very disagreeable person. This saying is used when anything that one dreads or dislikes has passed away.

You will shed tears with one eye like a monkey. A warning used to deter any one from being led into a snare of any kind.

It is said that when a monkey is caught in a trap he cries, but that tears come out of one eye only.

It is the seed of the umya (a species of wild hemp). This saying is applied to any thing or person considered very beautiful. The seed referred to is like a small jet black bead.

He is ripe inside, like a water-melon. Said of any one who has come to a resolution without yet expressing it. From its appearance it cannot be said with certainty whether a water-melon is ripe or not.

You will find out what Hili of the Amambala experienced. This saying is applied as a warning to people to avoid doing wrong, lest the punishment of Hili overtake them. Hili, or Tikoloshe, is, according to the belief of the Xosas, a mischievous being who usually lives in the water, but who goes about as a human dwarf playing tricks upon people. He milks the cows when no one is watching them. He causes women to fall in love with him, for he is of a very amorous disposition towards the female sex. There are few Xosas even at the present day who doubt the existence of such a being. It is said that a long time ago there was a man of the Amambala who had good reason to suspect that his wife had fallen in love with Hili. He accordingly pretended to go upon a journey, but returned in the middle of the night and fastened his dogs at the door of his hut. He then went inside and kindled a fire, when, as he anticipated, he found Hili there. The man called his neighbours, who came with sticks and beat Hili till he was unable to move. They then tied him up in a bundle, fastened him to the back of the woman, and sent her away to wander wherever she liked.

A spy for both. Said of a talebearer.

The shield turned the wrong way. This saying is applied to any one who goes over from one party to another. It is a common expression for one who turns evidence against accomplices in crime.

It is a cob stripped of grain in an ashpit. Said of a worthless character.

You will prefer roasted meat. This saying is applied to any one who is boasting immoderately, as a warning that if he

does not take care he will get into trouble, when he will be glad to take whatever comes to hand. He will prefer roasted meat because it is easily cooked, and he will have neither time nor means to boil it. This saying is also used as a threat, as if one said, I will punish you thoroughly.

Throats are all alike in swallowing. This proverb is used when one asks another for anything, and implies, if you do not give to me now, I will not give to you when I have anything that you would like a share of.

The people who rescue and kill. This saying is applied to Europeans. It first arose from the heavy demands made by Lord Charles Somerset upon the Gaikas in return for English protection, but the Xosas maintain that we have acted up to the description ever since. It is sometimes put in this form, The people who protect with one hand and kill with the other.

The coming of Nxele. This saying implies anything long expected, but which never occurs. Nxele (the lefthanded), or Makana, one of the most remarkable men that the Xosa tribe has produced, rose by his own merits from a private station to be the leader of the Ndlambe clans in the second decade of the nineteenth century. It was he who united them against the English when Lord Charles Somerset invaded their country with a view of compelling them to recognise a chief whom they detested. He led in person the attack upon Grahamstown, and only retreated after the flower of his forces was swept away. To obtain peace for his people, he voluntarily surrendered to the English troops, and was sent as a prisoner of state to Robben Island. In attempting to make his escape from the island in a boat, he was drowned. But the Xosas would not believe that Makana was dead, for they deemed him immortal. All through the wars of 1835, 1846-7, and 1851-2, they looked for his reappearance to lead them to victory. In 1872 his personal ornaments were still in preservation at a kraal near King-Williamstown, but about that date the hope of his return was generally abandoned.

He has drunk the juice of the flower of the wild aloe. Said of a dull, sleepy person. This juice when drunk has a

stupefying effect, and benumbs the limbs so as to make them powerless for a time.

The walls have come into collision, said of any dispute between persons of consequence.

A person who will not take advice gets knowledge when trouble overtakes him.

You have cast away your own for that which you are not sure of, equivalent to the English proverb A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

He is a buck of an endless forest, a saying applied to a shiftless person, one who never continues long in any occupation.

You are lighting a fire in the wind, said to any one who favours strangers in preference to relatives, or to their disadvantage.

There is no beast that does not roar in its den, meaning that a man recognises no superior in his own establishment. Equivalent to Every cock crows on his own dunghill.

A dog of the wind, a saying applied to any one who has no settled plan of living.

I, the adhesive grass, will stick fast to you. This proverb is used as a warning to any one to avoid a bad habit or an unworthy companion that cannot easily be got rid of.

The sun never sets without fresh news.

They are people of experience who do not sleep at a strange place, said in praise of one who is smart in going a message, or who performs any duty at a distance quickly.

The land is dead, a saying which implies that war has commenced.

One does not become great by claiming greatness, used to incite any one to the performance of noble deeds. It means that a man's actions, not his talk and boasting, are what people judge of his greatness by.

The wonderful and the impossible have come into collision. A saying applied to any intricate question.

The mist and the sun are together. A saying denoting a very great number.

It is the foot of a baboon. A saying denoting a treacherous person.

We shall hear, we are on the side towards which the wind blows. This saying denotes; we shall soon know all that is going on.

He has gone in pursuit of the (fabulous) birds of the sea. A saying applied to one whose ambitious aspirations are not likely to be realised.

They prevent us from getting red clay from the pit; and they do not use it. This saying is used of Europeans, to denote that they act as the dog in the manger towards the Xosas. It has unfortunately become a very common expression.

You drink out of the old cup. The indebe is a drinking vessel made of rushes. The saying is used to a wealthy man; and means, you use a vessel handed down to you from your ancestors.

You are creeping on your knees to the fireplace. This saying is used as a warning to any one who is following a course that must lead to ruin. It is as if one said, you are like an infant crawling towards the fire-circle, who is sure to get burnt.

To skin a mouse. A saying which implies to do anything secretly. A mouse can be skinned without any one seeing it, but an ox can not.

It has stuck fast by one of the front legs. This saying is used when one has committed oneself to any matter of importance. An animal cannot extricate itself easily when fast by one of its front legs.

One who eats the remains of a meal without first obtaining permission. This saying is used of an uncalled-for expression of opinion.

You disturb monkeys on their way to drink. This saying is used to express uncalled-for interference.

It dies and rises like the moon. Said of any question that springs up again after it is supposed to be settled.

There is no wormwood that comes into flower and does not wither. A proverb descriptive of the life of man.

The foot has no nose. This proverb is an exhortation to be hospitable. It is as if one said, give food to the traveller, because when you are on a journey your foot will not be able to smell out and avoid a man whom you have turned from your door, but to your shame it may carry you to his.

You have exposed yourself. This saying is applied as a warning not to give anything to an importunate person, as he would very likely be encouraged thereby to continue asking for more.

The crab has stuck fast between the stones at the entrance of its hole. Said of any one who is involved in difficulties of his own creation, or of one who raises an argument and is beaten in it.

He has fastened a dog to a shrub. This saying is used to denote a very greedy person, one who is so greedy as to fasten his dog to a shrub that the animal may not beg for food while he is eating. The shrub denoted is the very common one that is covered with yellow flowers at midsummer.

Guluwe's two of yesterday. This is a saying of any one who goes away promising to return, and does not do so. It had its origin in an event which happened six generations back. Guluwe was a hunter of great renown, who crossed the Kei with Khàkhábay, the great-grandfather of the late Sandile. No man was ever so skilful and successful in the pursuit of game as he. But when Khàkhábay took possession of the Amatola mountains, which he purchased from the Hottentot chieftainess Hoho, he found them infested by great numbers of Bushmen. One day Guluwe, who had two young men with him, killed an eland, but while he was still shouting his cry of triumph: "Tsi! ha! ha! ha! ha! the weapons of Khàkhábay!" he was surprised by a number of these inhuman abatwa. They said: "Look at the sun for the last time, you shall kill no more of our game." Guluwe offered them a large quantity of dacha for his ransom. One of the abatwa was unwilling to spare him, but all the rest agreed. They kept him with them while he pretended to send the two young men for the dacha, but privately he told them not to return. The Bushmen then commenced to eat the eland. They ate that day, and all that night, never ceasing to watch

Guluwe. The next morning they asked him when the young men would be back with the dacha, and he replied that he did not expect them before sunset. The abatwa, gorged with meat, then lay down to sleep, all except the one who advised that Guluwe should not be spared. That one watched a little while longer, but at length he too was overcome by drowsiness. Guluwe then with his assagai put one after another to death; until, forgetting himself, he shouted his cry: "Tsi! ha! ha! ha! ha! Izikali zika Rarabe!" This awakened the Bushman who had advised that he should be killed; he now sprang to his feet and escaped, calling out as he ran with the speed of the wind: "I said this Guluwe of the Khàkhábays should be destroyed; you who are dead have perished through not following my advice."

Of poetry the Bantu had a fairly rich store, but there was nothing particularly grand in it. It was chanted by men on special occasions, and consisted chiefly of adulation of chiefs, deeds of war, and actions of animals. Thus a favourite ox might have a chant in its praise. The war chants, in certain parts of which the whole of the men present joined, were certainly impressive, but those in ordinary use were monotonous and disagreeable to a European ear. All were distinguished by a note of sadness. These people, though their voices were rich and melodious, had no conception of such vocal music as we are accustomed to: they had neither rhymic hymn, nor song, nor glee. Their musical instruments were of the rudest kind, mostly calculated to make noise rather than melody, those in ordinary use being capable of producing only a monotonous thrumming sound. The best consisted merely of pieces of wood or iron for keys, with calabashes attached to them, arranged on stretched strings, and struck with a small round-headed cane, or of thin iron keys fastened over a gourd or hollow block of wood, and touched by the hand. Of these there were several kinds, but all were constructed on the same principle.

The description given in the preceding pages is that of the Bantu in general south of the Zambesi when Europeans first became acquainted with them at the beginning of the sixteenth

1911 Beech Suk.pdf

THE SUK

THEIR LANGUAGE AND FOLKLORE

BY

MERVYN W. H. BEECH

WITH INTRODUCTION BY
SIR CHARLES ELIOT

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS
1911

And it is quite true what the cow said, for if there were no cattle there would be no war. For no one wants to fight about buffaloes.

Answer. Tûl.
A-white-ant's-hill.

When I am taking ants out of an ant-hill.

[These hills, often ten feet high, are hollow, and not unlike a horn.
From them the Suk collect the termites for food.]

3. Rel-e' ti'-chu lopai pirir kirokit.
White cows-my all red bull.

Answer. Kelat ngô ñgaliep.
Teeth and tongue.

4. Ka-terer-an ôr
I-lingered-I (on) the-road.

Answer. Arawa^s.
The-moon.

5. Ko-choit-a' sirim-nyon kowo^s kiau.
I-threw-I a-chain it-went (to-the-) open-plain.

I threw away a chain and it went far into the open plain.

Answer. Ôr ny'o-wet-ei.
The-road which-I-shall-take.

[If one throws out a long chain, the curves it takes are not unlike
a winding native path before one.]

6. Ka-rat kwoa^{ng}.
He-has strung-his-bow.

Answer. Kuntopal.
Rainbow.

7. Ko-wuit-a' minyon to chep-toya^s.
I-stretched-out-I the-skin of a-dark-coloured-ox.

Answer. Yim.
Clear (dark blue) sky

8. Ko-lit-a' ñge^{ng} ke-pirir met.
I-entered-I a-salt-lick it-became-red my-head.

Answer. Terema.
Bleeding-arrow.

[An arrow is shot into the neck-veins of the ox so as to draw its
blood without killing it. The neck of the ox is the salt-lick.]

9. Ki-meriensio^s.
They-stood-in-threatening-attitude.

Answer. Nekergh-is.
Cooking-pot-stones.

[Three stones are placed in a triangle. They face one another but
'do not fight'. The cooking-pot is rested upon them.]

1911 Roscoe Baganda.pdf

THE BAGANDA

AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR NATIVE CUSTOMS
AND BELIEFS

BY

THE REV. JOHN ROSCOE, Hon. M.A. (Cantab.)

Formerly of the Church Missionary Society.

Univ. of
California

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1911

them collect a hundred pots full of tears to act as water for the work, because the charcoal from wood and the ordinary water from wells are of no use for forging a man." The King agreed to the request and gave the order to all the people to shave their heads and burn the hair into charcoal, and to collect all the tears. When they had all shaved their heads and burnt their hair, there was not nearly one load of charcoal, and when they had collected all the tears there were not two pots full of water. When the King saw the results of his endeavours he sent for the smith Walukaga, and said to him: "Don't trouble to make the man, because I am unable to get the charcoal or the tears for the water." Walukaga knelt down and thanked the King; he then added, "My Lord, it was because I knew you would be unable to get the hair for charcoal and the tears for the water that I asked for them; you had asked me to do an impossible thing." All the people present laughed and said: "Walukaga speaks the truth."

PROVERBS

Bya kuno tasenguka, agoba abaja.

A grumbler does not leave his master, he only stops others from coming to serve him.

Kyakula ndaba, enyanja eta muvubi.

The man who grows up by the sea is drowned at last.

Oguli omwa muno tegugoba ngo.

The stick which is at your friend's house will not drive away the leopard.

(A stick at a distance is of no use in an emergency.)

Akunonya amewola takunonya masasula.

A borrower only seeks you in order that he may borrow, and not to repay you.

Lubare mbera ngotadeko nembiro.

The god (*Lubare*) helps you when you put forth your running powers.

Atamanya naku akuziyosa mulyango.

He who has not suffered does not know how to pity.

Akuise enkya, omuise egulo.

He who passes you in the morning, you will pass him in the evening.

Banange bangi nga tonagwa wabi.

You have many friends as long as you are prosperous (not fallen into disgrace).

Namakabirye afa enjala.

He who has two places where he seeks his food is likely to die from hunger (because at each home the wife will expect him to go to the other for his food and so will not cook for him).

Atamanya mpweo ye magombe.

He who does not know the cold of the other world.

The grave and the next world are thought to be very cold, and in consequence the people place numbers of barkcloths for the ghost in the grave, and cover it again, when the earth is filled in, with thatch or plantain leaves to keep off the cold. In like manner, a person who does not understand the amount of work some task entails will send too few workmen to do it, or when he does not understand the value of a thing will send too small a sum to purchase it, like the man who only puts a little thatch on the grave.

Emwanyi gyewasiga tebemu mulawa.

The coffee-berry you plant has no outward sign of decay. Outside it looks sound, but inside it may be rotten. So a person may seem to be a true friend, but has no real regard for you.

Endegi ziba nyingi negyomba.

Many bells on the legs make a loud sound. Many people make short work of a task.

Balubuliza mabazi, nga buli ku mudo lugaya.

The thin cow goes on eating the grass while they are asking for the axe to kill it. That is, a sick cow goes on eating even when preparations are being made to kill it, quite regardless of the danger of death. A careless man who does not heed a warning is like such a cow.

Kanslewo egoye, omuwabuta yalisalirawo Bubiho.

Let me cut the difficult knot, as the wizard did at Bubiho.

There was a chief whose son was said to have been killed by witchcraft. A man was caught and accused; he, however,

denied the deed and was put to the poison ordeal. Everyone was so sure he was the culprit that a fire was made ready to burn him after the trial. When the poison was brought to him he refused to drink it and said: "Let me settle the point," which he did by jumping into the lake and was drowned.

Enyumba kisaka.

The *kisaka* house. The *kisaka* is a thicket in the forest which, like an ordinary house, conceals what is in it, and the passer-by does not know that an animal hides in it until he has passed and the animal has sprung upon him. Some people look all right outwardly, but are waiting their opportunity to catch the unwary.

Onjagala lusuto lwebagala mulekwa mulumbe.

You appear and pretend to like me, as the orphan child is loved while still mourning for its father.

People come to pity the child and speak sympathetically to it while there is hope of getting some of the things left by the deceased, but when they have got all they can, they forget the child.

Najukiranga nenseka, ngasigwe bakigambye.

When I remember it I laugh, because it is not I who am concerned.

We can laugh at some calamity which happens to another, but if it were our own, it would be no laughing matter.

Gwekitaliride nyina, nti kabukya.

When it is not your mother who is in danger of being eaten by the wild animal, the matter can wait until the morrow. When it is some evil happening to someone not related to us we can leave the matter until to-morrow, and not be in a hurry.

Sebuko bunafa.

When relationship is not dead.

When a man loves his wife, and they are happy together, he also loves to see her relations, and is glad to welcome them as visitors; he entertains them, giving them his best. When there is no love between husband and wife, the husband does not want to see his wife's relations, nor to have the expense of entertaining them.

Lumbe musolo.

Death is like a wild animal.

Whenever death finds a person it kills him.

Tuli bange tanuna mulirye.

We are many, and he does not derive the strength from his fetich.

It is the custom for the warrior to put his fetich to his lips before going into battle, and draw in a long breath from it so as to drink in its strength and be nerved and secure against the foe. In a large army a warrior is apt to neglect this precaution and trust to the numerical strength of force, so that he is killed in the battle.

Kirimulala, Omusigire teyegulira ngabo.

When there is peace in the country the bailiff does not buy a shield.

The bailiff trusts to the continuance of peace, and taking no precautions against war, is caught unprepared.

Kizesengere, kita wamputu.

The insect *kizesengere* kills the person who neglects the warning.

The insect makes a noise by night if there is any person or any animal about, so that when a person hears it he knows there is danger and can take another path; he thus escapes the trap or the wild animal, whereas if he neglects the warning and goes on, he will, in all probability, be caught and killed.

Nsambu yewala.

The maize garden is at a distance.

Maize is a food easily cooked in an emergency, for an unexpected visitor, and therefore the garden in which it is grown should be near at hand. If it is at a distance, and the visitor has to wait until the hostess fetches the food and cooks it, its value is lost; it is as if a person said: "I would like to help you, but my goods are elsewhere; I cannot do so now."

Agya amangi yagamanya kyegedira.

He who has many fetiches knows the use of the taboos of each.

The owner knows that certain fetiches must not be touched after he has eaten certain foods, and each must be used for

some particular purpose. In like manner, the person who has to do with many people soon learns to discern their peculiarities and knows to whom to apply and whom to avoid in any emergency.

Agya erya na mere teyekanya bagenyi.

He who obtains his food through the medium of the fetiches he possesses must not be angry because he has many visitors to help him eat it. Through his skill in obtaining the right fetiches he has secured a plentiful supply of food, and so numbers of people visit him because of the good food and the abundance of it.

Tabalamule.

He does not separate them.

The man who, seeing people at strife, urges them on to fight that he may enjoy the fun, is no peacemaker.

Omulungi ye mwanina abagni.

The beautiful woman is the sister of many.

That is a good-looking woman has many admirers, who claim to be related to her in order to be able to visit her and make love to her.

Abontu magoma gavuga aliwo.

The drum beats for the office, and not for the person who holds it. People are attracted by honour and office more than by the person who holds it.

Abonabona nomulwade.

He who suffers with the sick person.

The person who takes trouble, nurses, and toils for the sufferer, is not always the person who succeeds him.

Eka tefa etusa mugenyi.

No one dies in the house when the stranger arrives.

When a man is beating his wife and a stranger arrives, he is able to stop him before he kills her. Or when a man is very ill and the medicine-man arrives, he helps the sick person and averts inevitable death.

Omubi tavarwo.

The despised person is ever present.

Kitunda kya murwogo.

A branch of the casava tree.

Branches of this tree when thrown aside readily take root, and grow and yield fruit ; in the same way a despised person often brings glory to the nation.

Meme Katale.

The heart is a market-place.

A person goes in and looks round the market for what he wants to buy ; so each heart chooses the things it likes best.

Okukula ke dabuto nga tungulu.

The fruit of the *tungulu* becomes red when ripe, and is like the flower it first produced. A comparison between childhood and second childhood.

Kagwa ensonyi nga mavana aba nyina.

Covered with shame like a child who has stolen from its mother.

Owakujujuba takwasa mutego.

He who takes by force is not able to trap.

Gentleness and not force arrives at truth.

Kabaka nyanja.

The King is the lake.

The lake does not differentiate ; it drowns the fisherman who is always about it, and the occasional traveller. So the King makes no difference in those he taxes ; all have to pay.

Okusekera mukikonde nga asikide omugaga.

To laugh in the hand like the person who has become heir to a wealthy person.

The heir of a wealthy person when he goes to take possession of the property has to put on a grave air as though he were sorry for the dead, and must cover his mouth with his hand if he feels inclined to smile. So a person expressing sympathy with another's calamity, when in reality he is glad at what has happened, is like the person laughing behind his hand.

Amagezi gakuwedeko okubongota nga toneyaltra.

Sense has left you like a person who nods in sleep, before he has spread his mat to sleep upon.

A person who begins some expensive work and has not reckoned whether he has the means to finish it, is like a person going to sleep before he has made his bed.

Banange Banjagala nga tanagwa wabi.

I had numbers of friends before calamity befell me.

Ekibi tekibula musombi.

Risk is never absent from those who seek wealth.

Busa bwa mbogo.

A pellet of buffalo dung.

Dry on the surface, wet and filthy underneath.

An insincere friend makes a fair outside appearance, but at heart wishes you evil.

Omusu muzade.

The rat with young.

An old person who has sons can always avoid punishment for undone work, because he can get one or other of his sons to do it for him ; so the rat with young, when the dogs attack it, escapes while they stop to catch the young ones.

Ekyalo ekitalimu busikwasikwa.

A garden without young trees.

Such a garden will soon come to an end, because the other trees will grow up, yield fruit and die. Children are the true wealth of a country.

Nanyini kabya tayasa abumbirira.

The owner of the pot does not kill the potter.

A person only destroys what he can replace.

Amazi amatono.

A little water.

Where the cattle are short of water the herdsmen allow the cows with calves to drink first because they are most valuable. So a man with a few possessions chooses to whom he will give them and does not allow everyone to take as he likes.

Bakuba emyali.

They break unbaked pots.

As an owner can break unbaked pots provided he has the potter to make fresh ones for him, so an extravagant person can waste his substance provided he has wealth.

Olusala ekyai.

He who cuts the plantain fibre.

The man who cuts the plantain fibre from the tree trunk scatters the small ants that have built there. So when a wealthy person dies his dependants are scattered.

1912 Kitching Banyamwenge.pdf

ON THE BACKWATERS OF THE NILE

STUDIES OF SOME CHILD
RACES OF CENTRAL AFRICA

BY

THE REV. A. L. KITCHING, M.A.

LATE EXHIBITIONER OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

AUTHOR OF

"AN OUTLINE GRAMMAR OF THE GANG LANGUAGE"

WITH 56 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN
BY THE AUTHOR

AND A PREFACE BY

PETER GILES, Litt.D., Hon. LL.D.

MASTER OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

T. FISHER UNWIN

LONDON: ADELPHI TERRACE
LEIPSIC: INSELSTRASSE 20

1912

On the Backwaters of the Nile

lead you astray on a perplexing point of grammar it is, to say the least, annoying.

The best-fitting key to native idiom and thought and the clearest mirror of native custom is to be found in the proverbs so numerous in some African dialects. They form at the same time a fascinating subject of study, if a somewhat difficult one. The proverbs of the Banyoro, for instance, are just as elliptical as our own English ones, and consequently just as hard to understand, even after much explanation. Add to this characteristic the difference in the point of view and the references to native custom implied, and the obscurity of many proverbs will at once be obvious. I once thought that I had got hold of one that would conveniently enforce a moral lesson, and wrote down in my note-book the proverb as follows: "If I eat what is my mother's, that is theft." However, I subsequently discovered that there should be a note of interrogation, "is that theft?" which completely upset the Christian application of the proverb. Many of the proverbs are exact equivalents of well-known English saws, but of course in terms of native life and environment. If you want to warn the hesitator you do not say, "Between two stools you come to the ground," but "He who hunts two (rats) gets left." Cats being a foreign importation there is no "When the cat's away the mice will play," but you may say, "When the master is absent, the frogs climb up the house," this not being a difficult feat in the case of the beehive-shaped hut of Bunyoro.

Or again, the same idea may be expressed

Language

in the reverse way as in "Slowly, slowly got the snail to the well" for "More haste less speed." A version of "A burnt child fears the fire" is seen in "He who is bitten by a snake fears a lizard," the Lunyoro distinctly scoring in point of emphasis. Sometimes there is no doubt about the applicability to Scriptural truths; "Be sure your sin will find you out," is well enforced by "If you burn a house can you conceal the smoke?" while the lesson of the mote and the beam has its counterpart in "Hush your friend's baby, when your's is asleep."

The most interesting of the proverbs, if the most difficult to appreciate, are those involving reference to native customs. I well remember the long quest after the point of a proverb which finds its English equivalent in "One swallow does not make a summer." The words run, "*Oruswa ruti Parungu Bunyata orame?*" This takes the palm for ellipsis, the full sense being, "When the first white-ant makes a whirring do you say 'Goodbye, dry-bread?'" To understand this one must first recall the composition of the regular meals partaken of by the Banyoro. They consist of millet porridge or boiled sweet potatoes, with some concoction of boiled herbs, meat, grasshoppers, or white ants as a relish, according to the season. All things edible are divided into two classes, mere food and relishes. The one thing to be avoided is to have to eat, as we should say, *dry bread*, that is either millet or potatoes without any relish. Now we come to the white-ants or termites; at the commencement of

On the Backwaters of the Nile

each rainy season the superfluous males or drones in each hill fly out from the nests below, and are consumed in vast quantities by birds, monkeys, lizards, and not least, by the people themselves. These last catch the insects by erecting a rough booth over the hill, and digging a hole in the ground in front of which a fire is kindled. The hunter then squats down in front of the fire and keeps up a perpetual tapping on an upturned gourd, whereupon out swarm the drone termites, choke in the smoke and fall into the hole. I once saw some men with several gallons of these *enswa* which they were preparing for sale by boiling them and removing the wings. Now at length we are ready to explain our proverb. One does not chuckle over the supply of relish for one's millet as soon as the first ant flies; you wait till the real swarm begins, or "A strawberry blossom will not sweeten dry bread."

Much less complicated is the reference in "The visitor who has not slept in the house catches the cows that have been already bled." This refers to the custom among the cow-herds of bleeding the cows in the neck in order to obtain blood for drinking, of which they are very fond. I remember this proverb being quoted to a boy, a stranger, who brought my chair back from church one Sunday morning, and put it in the wrong room in the house, not knowing the proper arrangement of the furniture. The average native is a most unobservant person of natural objects unless they are edible, but an occasional proverb shows that

Language

some at least of his ancestors took an interest in even "useless" creatures. There is a rather pretty proverb based on the habits of a creeping thing known to science, I believe, as the caddis-worm. This little creature builds for itself a tiny log-hut, by weaving into its cocoon morsels of stick, with the result that it appears to have been carefully wrapped up in a sort of cylindrical splint, the whole affair being not more than half an inch long. This insect is called *Akasenyanku*, or "Little firewood collector," and its habitat forms the basis of the proverb "Misfortune never knocks at the door; little firewood collector and his house." That is to say, when I go from home I will carry all my belongings with me, like the insect, so that they may not be stolen.

The African dog is anything but a handsome animal, but it is a familiar figure and provides material for proverbs, owing to its habit of sleeping in the ashes of the fire for the sake of the warmth. One saying points much the same moral as the *Akasenyanku*, viz., the unexpectedness of misfortune. "*Ebimu bifa ntamanyire; embwa ehya omukira*" ("Ill-luck creeps like the fire on a dog's tail").

Illustrations are also provided by proverbs of the (to us) strange point of view of people like the Banyoro, and of their type of thought and character. An entirely niggardly spirit is evidently contemplated as the normal attitude of mind in the saying, "*Atagende aboha ntanda yabyenju*," of which a free rendering is, "Goodbye; have some

On the Backwaters of the Nile

sweets [bananas] for the journey?" The idea is that if your friend is not going to accompany you on the road, he ties up for you merely ripe bananas which will quickly be finished or spoil, instead of a good supply of millet-flour or a bundle of potatoes, which can be drawn upon from time to time.

The unambitious, wearily fatalistic habit of mind of the majority of Banyoro women, is exhibited by the saying, "*Nukwo mbamanyire; azika nibarora*," " 'The old story!' and she orders the coffin." The poor creature has had so many children, and they have all died, that she no longer troubles to try and get them well, but makes preparation for the funeral as soon as one is taken ill. This also throws a lurid light on the terrible infant mortality which is so sad a feature of African life.

The clear insight given by such sayings into native custom is invaluable when disputes have to be settled, and the pioneer missionary is sure to have a good deal of this work to do in his effort to gain the confidence of the people in districts where European justice is not yet known. In the Gan' country quite a lot of time was consumed in trying to adjust various cases or in noting particulars to be handed in at the Government courts. Though the Gan' themselves have no proverbs that I could discover, yet the similarity of all native habits of thought makes Bunyoro proverbs applicable to circumstances in the other district. There is a saying among the Banyoro to the effect that "If disgrace falls on your mother it falls on your

Language

father's wife"; the meaning is that one wife of a man gets implicated in the fault of her fellow wife. This saying was exemplified in one of the most confusing cases I ever remember hearing. A certain man X had two wives, Y and Z; one harvest-time when all were in the fields together, Y cooked a mess of semsem with poison in it, and gave it to a young man against whom she had a grudge. The young man not being near his home, his relatives were unable to avenge his death at once, but on discovering the identity of the culprit, proceeded to take measures to exact recompense. The feud made slow progress, and in course of time X died, and his two wives returned to their old homes. Y's home was far away in another district, but the father of Z lived not many miles from our station and from the murdered youth's relatives, chief of whom was a man Q. This man was still thirsting for vengeance, and got up a raid on Z's father; he collected a large party of friends and seized a lot of cattle, carrying them off to his own village. Smarting under this manifest injustice, Z's father came along to me to appeal for help; I wrote down details of the case for the information of the nearest Government official, who tried the case and awarded Q a good term of imprisonment, while the cows were all returned. The confusing point in this case was the fact that Q's name was Otor and Y's name was Ator, so that the very closest attention was necessary to follow the details.

But to return to our proverbs; some are the

On the Backwaters of the Nile

concisely put moral of a fable or folk-tale, and much again may be learnt from these tales both of custom and speech.

“Too much confidence lost the frog his tail,” is a warning which does not exhibit native character in a very flattering light, and the origin of the proverb is a tale that the grandmother of all frogs was giving out the tails, and one youngster said to himself, “It’ll be all right, granny is sure to keep me one; I’ll go in the morning.” But when he went in the morning the tails were all gone, whence comes the race of tailless frogs that we see to-day. The saying is now quoted to warn all and sundry that it is wiser to reckon a man to be a rogue till you have proved him to be an honest fellow.

Many of the fables are of great length, and bear a strong resemblance to the tales of Uncle Remus which are now so well known, Wakame the rabbit being in the majority of cases the clever one among the animals. One of the shorter tales runs as follows :—

Dramatis Personæ

Wakame	= The rabbit
Warugo	= The leopard
Wanjoju	= The elephant
Wambogo	= The buffalo
Wamusu	= The edible rat
Wampisi	= The hyæna

One day Wakame was walking along driving before him his ox, when he came to a place where all the animals were gathered together. As he could not get by, he announced that he would

1912 Westermann Shilluk.pdf

THE
SHILLUK PEOPLE
THEIR LANGUAGE AND
FOLKLORE
BY DIEDRICH
WESTERMANN
=

WITH EIGHT PLATES
AND A SKETCH MAP

^{C. P.}PHILADELPHIA, PA.

THE BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS OF
THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF N. A.

DIETRICH REIMER (ERNST VOHSEN) BERLIN

XVI. RIDDLES.

106. Riddles.

- Adùk gónó lùyì: mèn ófún.* The gray one is going under a pond: Loaf of bread, which is put into the fireplace.
- nìn gúwà nḡné lḡkò: táté kál.* my necklace is seen beyond the river: The unbarked, white fence sticks.
- nēmzi kḡ rei gen fa gútè: tyné dean.* Brothers who never hurt each other: The two horns of a cow.
- Ajwōgò lañ war, é yḡwò: yiep dean.* which sorcerer spends the whole night in swinging?: The tail of the cow.
- Anor-nor kēmḡ wen Fashōdḡ: áléyò.* Anor-nor visits his father (the king) at Fashoda: The grass called *aléyò*, which is used in making ropes. When taxes, cows etc., are brought to the king at F., the rope with which the things are bound, gets to F.
- Fwót, fa fyél: búl.* It is beaten, yet is does not ease: The drum.
- A rik a rik, fera manì: tédét.* (Dinka-language, except the last word.)
- Akur jón deñ: chḡgḡ.* white pigeons: Bleached bones.
- A pō tḡk na tyḡk okḡdḡ: Tḡ ḡḡḡ.*
- Adùk obḡgò kwóté négḡ: gyḡno.* The gray one who is spotted is driving her little ones: The hen.
- Aduk chḡr yi fwòdḡ: ótḡk.* The gray one is running towards the fields: The mist.
- Néjók gwotì fen: dwḡi.* The black-white cow is making white the earth: The moon.
- Nwòlì yan tḡnḡ chḡgò toke bur: yit.* Little children stand continually at the side of the heaps of ashes: The ears of man.
- nemḡi ḡḡḡe lùn fén: Órēm.* Two brothers, their mouth is turned down: The nose.
- Adāle jwḡk yigḡ lùn fén: tḡu.* The calabash of God which is turned downward: The fruit of the heglig-tree.
- Agar agar, yaḡ win: lḡk.* A long row of trees full of white birds: The teeth. Along the rivers one sees frequently trees which are literally covered with snow-white birds.
- Wḡt fen, kōrḡ fa tōr: anḡnḡ.* Thrown on the ground, yet not broken: Mucus from the nose.

Tetel pōte rate: chūl dān.

Yēn lōn kē yēn lōn: wān dān. It is on this side and on the other side: The eye of man.

Ya wēli yi kēti kēn? tēpó dān. I am travelling, where are you going?: The shadow of man.

Wā dāgù, tē bā kēti: būr. We remove, he does not go: The ashes. If people leave a home-stead, the ashes remain behind.

A rigi rik pere māni: Tedet.¹

¹ Some of the riddles have not been translated, their meaning being obscene, some have for this reason been omitted altogether.

1913 Junod Thonga.pdf

The Life of a South African Tribe

BY

HENRI A. JUNOD

OF THE

Swiss Romande Mission

II. THE PSYCHIC LIFE



NEUCHÂTEL (SWITZERLAND)

IMPRIMERIE ATTINGER FRÈRES

1913

own ! I have already quoted some examples of riddles in my first volume, and the obscurity of these sayings has been sufficiently obvious. Without special explanation it would be difficult indeed to discover their meaning.

I. *Proverbial sayings.*

As regards *proverbs*, the Ba-Ronga possess a few which contain one single proposition, as for example :

- 1) Mumiti wa nhengele a dumba nkolo wa kwe.
He who swallows a large stone has confidence in the size of his throat.

This might be said in any country and will be recognised, at once, as applying to bumptious and pretentious folk !

- 2) U nga hlaule matjhuna ya mhangela.
One must not choose the male of the guinea-fowl.

Guinea fowls are all alike, male and female. So do not point to one and say : “ This is a male. ” You would be liable to make a mistake, and to be made fun of ! This proverb is said to a young husband who might be tempted to prepare the *ntehe* before the birth of his child, which is taboo. (I. p. 44). Compare this with the proverb : Don’t count your chickens before they are hatched.

- 3) Tinhlanga ta le ntjhaku ti tibyiwa hi mutlhabi.
The tattooing marks made on the back are known by the tattooer (not by the tattooed !).

You do not know what may happen when you have turned your back. This warning was given by one of the Church elders, of Lourenço Marques, to a missionary who was leaving on furlough !

- 4) Matimba ya ngwenya i mati.
The strength of the crocodile is water.

When you are in your own domain you can succeed ; do not try to fight outside it. You would be like “ a fish out of water ”.

5) U nga nwe mati, u seletela nhlobo ; mundjuku u ta nwa kwini ?

Do not close the well after having drunk. Where would you drink to-morrow ?

Here the sense is at once apparent.

6) Mbuti ya shihaha a yi belekeli ntlhambin.

A good goat does not bring forth in the midst of the flock.

I heard this proverb in one of our Synods. One of the Native members wanted to exhort his co-delegates to abstain from giving their advice, and voting precipitately on a certain subject : let us rather go outside, discuss amongst ourselves, and when we have come to an understanding we shall come back and vote as one man !

This last example shows how such proverbs are used... They sometimes are quoted in a low voice, so as to be heard only by those whom it is desired to warn. It is an instance of the *phamba* just referred to.

Compare also the proverb quoted (p. 22) in connection with tilling the fields :

Do not look at the weeds and think : Now ! I have tilled a large field !

Be not satisfied by mere external appearances ! Weeds may be plentiful, yet the field be small !

Hundreds of such sayings might be collected, (1) though I do not think they are so extensively used as, for instance, in the Suto tribe, where M. Jacottet told me he collected one thousand of them. The Thonga replace them by riddles, which seem to be more developed amongst this people than in the neighbouring tribes.

(1) We might also consider as proverbs, and include under this heading, the figurative terminology used to express the principles of right and justice, which are, as it were, a first codification of the common law, and to which I have previously referred — as for instance the curious sentence : A cow which has calved is not used for paying a debt. (I. p. 215).

II. *Riddles.*

I have already described (I. p. 319) the part riddles play in the games of the Thonga village. The riddle, *mbumbana*, consists first in guessing where the charcoal piece is hidden, and then it is merely a matter of guess work. But it may have a more literary character, when it consists in a more or less witty question which requires a given reply. The answer, here, is in one word ; so these riddles may be called *riddles in one sentence*.

Leshi u nga khandjiyiki nsinya ya shone, n'shini ? — Hi ndjulu.

What is the thing up the trunk of which one cannot climb ? It is the juncus.

Leshi nhaka nenge wa shone u nga rwali hi ku bindja u ya tlhasa shilungwin, n'shini ? — Hi nsuna.

What is the animal whose leg is so heavy that you could not carry it to Lourenço Marques ? — The mosquito (which is so very light !)

Leshi shi nga heta hubo ya ka Machakene, shi ndjundja, shi kwala hubyen ? — Hi nhwala !

What is it that is all over the square at Machakene, that creeps and crawls about on it ? It is the louse !

This is a malicious one ! The village of Machakene, formerly in the immediate vicinity of Lourenço Marques, where the fashionable European quarter is now situated, was the place where men, arriving from the interior to find work at the sea-port, usually passed the night. They appear to have been somewhat annoyed with unwelcome attentions ! Hence the riddle.

Here is a rather more difficult one :

Tiban leshi, nambi mamana wa nwana a ku mu randja ngopfu, loko a tlhasa kaya a nga hluleka ka ku mu yamukela ? — Hi nyimba.

Guess what is it that a mother dearly loves but which could not run to meet her on her return home ? — It is the unborn babe in her womb.

Another riddle of the same kind is this :

Tiba leshi, nambi shi shongile, afaka u nga ti wopsana na ye ? — Hi makwenu.

Do you know the person to whom you would not make an improper proposal, however handsome she may be? — It is your sister.

Leshi nsinya ya shone yi nga bonekiki ntshini? — Yendje-yendje.

The thing of which the stem is invisible, what is it? — The cuscuta.

This plant makes Natives wonder, because its root and stem are so rarely seen. One knows that it grows from a root, but when it has developed, the stem dies and the plant lives as a parasite.

Leshi, nambi wa ba, ntonsi wa kone wu nga boneki? — I mati.

The thing which you can beat without leaving a scar? — Water.

One more which has a more philosophical appearance and which might be of later origin.

Leshi nga hamba Tilo ni Misaba, hi tshini? — Ntumbuluko!

The thing which made Heaven and Earth, what is it? — Nature!

Ntumbuluko comes from *ku tumbuluka*, to be created, to appear, and is well translated by the word Nature (See Part VI Chapter I).

The Thonga possess a plentiful supply of *enigmas in two propositions*, which they call *psitekatekicana* and of which I have collected about a hundred. I could easily have found ten times as many. One of our female neighbours (Lishanyi) knew a great number of these and could pour them forth without stopping well on towards the middle of the night.

Whoever may be the most expert at asking the questions takes the lead, and commences with a kind of invocation of which I have not been able to discover the meaning: *Ŋwan-nyanga mintjuti*, lit. son of the moon, shadows. Then addressing one of the other players, and speaking very rapidly, he (or she) will say: “Teka, teka, teka (take, guess) heeee...!”, following this up with the question to be asked, which forms the first part of the *enigma*; the person addressed must immediately reply with the phrase forming the second part. If he is unable to answer, or gives a wrong reply, the questioner says: “Psi ku hlulile” — “you are beaten”, and passes

on to another player, again beginning with “teka, teka, teka” and asking the same question until some one is able to give the correct rejoinder. Hence the name of this game, psiteka-tekisana, i. e. things which you make others guess.

It will be seen that we are not dealing with enigmas in the proper sense of the word, with solutions only to be obtained by keenness of thought and reflection; the answers to these must be learnt by heart, and it only requires a good memory to become an adept in the game. The ancestors, however, who composed the enigmas, and handed them down to posterity, were by no means lacking in wit and ingenuity. The examples given below I owe mostly to Timotheo Mandlati, a Nkuna of Shiluvane, who wrote them down for me in the dialect of his own tribe; some of them are in Hlengwe. I also obtained a good many from my Ronga informants, Spoon and Galu of Libombo, Titus, and Shilati, a blind man who thought himself very learned in the “enigmatic art”, but who understood very little of what he was talking about, and, in any case, was quite unable to give any explanation of his enigmas. Some are the common property of both Ba-Ronga and Ba-Nkuna; they seem to be very popular throughout the Thonga tribe.

To begin with, here are some examples of which *the inner meaning is not difficult to discover* :

Teka-teka-teka-he ! Tiba ro pshya matlelo ? — Ndlopfu yi fa hi tshembeti.

The lake dries up at the edges ? — The elephant is killed by a small arrow.

A great result (the drying up of a lake, the death of an elephant) is often produced by a very small cause (the gradual evaporation of water at the edges, a little arrow). The idea approximates that expressed in the proverb : “Il ne faut pas mépriser les petits commencements”, or “small beginnings make great endings”.

Ndja ha batla mpalala ? — Ndja ha hleketela ..

I am still carving an iron wood stick ? — I am still thinking about it.

An undecided man could thus reply to those urging him to immediate action. The wood of the *mpalala* is extremely hard. "It is a long business to carve a figure of this wood" says the cunning fellow; "I am not going to make up my mind about it in a hurry!"

Ndji pfumala tshati; nha ndji ya tjhema nhonga?

— Ndji pfumala ntlambi; nha ndji ya lobola munhu lweyo.

I have no axe, or I would go and cut a stick?

— I have no oxen, or I would go and lobola this girl.

This is the sigh of the impecunious lover. By the first phrase he laments the want of an ordinary every-day object (an axe) which prevents him obtaining something he wishes for (a stick); he leaves it to be understood that a much more precious article is lacking (oxen, money, a lobolo) which would enable him to obtain something infinitely more to be desired (the girl he loves).

Ndji tshukumetele kwakwa, dji ya wa ngolongolo?

— Ndji yamukele psikomo psi pfa ni Ba-Nhlabi.

I have thrown away my kwakwa; it has rolled away to the ends of the earth (into distant lands)?

I have accepted the hoes which come from the Ba-Hlabi.

I have sold my daughter in marriage to the people of Hlabi (on the other side of the Limpopo, further up than Bilene, in Gaza); by so doing I have lost my child for ever. She has disappeared like a round fruit (kwakwa) which, when thrown a long distance, rolls and rolls away until it can never again be found. — Moral : Don't let your girls marry foreigners (Compare I, p. 247).

Shiyindlwana mfontsho? — Mundjuku milandju.

The little hut falls down? — To-morrow, debts.

If you don't keep your house in good order, you will soon find yourself in difficulties. A disorderly life leads to debt.

In other enigmas the meaning is not so self-evident as in the preceding examples. There are some which are simply a com-

parison of two objects or of an object and an idea which resembles it in some one particular. With the rapidity of perception characteristic of the Native mind, some clever individual has been struck with the resemblance, and has therefore composed an enigma of which the obscurity is in direct proportion to its conciseness.

Rihondjo ra ndlopfu ku mpfara ? — Munhu wa ndlala tihanyi ?
The sound of a cracked elephant-tusk ? — The anger of a hungry man.

Both have a false ring.

This Nkuna enigma is met with amongst the Ronga in the following form :

Litimbo la phila ku mbvetshe ? — Amunhu wa ndlala mahlundju.
The creaking of the dried sorghum stalk ? — The anger of a hungry man.
Sikisiki dja mbangwe ? — Longoloko dja Ba-Tschwa.
The stem of hemp ? — The Zulu formation (when on the march, following one another).

There is in the way the leaves grow on the hemp stalks a suggestion of the formation, or rather of the forest of plumes, of Zulu warriors on the march...

Ntshiba ukulu wa mpfafati ? — Ndjeko yikulu ya balungu.
The tall ntshiba ? — The long tumblers of the Whites.

The ntshiba is the tallest tree on the Ronga hills, and gives a beautiful shade. The long tumblers used by the Whites answer the same purpose. Both conduce to refreshment for the weary !

Tihuku ta ka Manyisa ta ka nhingena he psisuka ?
— Banwhanyana ba ka Manyisa ba ku kandja ba khisamile.
The fowls of Manyisa enter the fowl-house tails first ?
— The Manyisa girls pound maize sitting down.

This is probably a sly hit at the girls of the Manyisa country, who are reported to seat themselves when crushing maize;

everywhere else this operation is performed standing erect. They don't do things like other people. — Chickens also sometimes do things the wrong way !

Enigmas which refer to some *historical event* may be classed as a third category. The best known is the enigma concerning Tembe and his sons. (See I, p. 22). Here is another :

Ndji fambi nhlangwa lokulu ndji heketa Mimaleiyane ?

— Ndji djimi nsimo leyikulu, ndji byala ndlowu yinwe.

I walked all across a big plain to accompany Memaleiyane ?

— I hoed a large field and only planted a single pea.

This is doubtless the story of a rejected lover who thus wittily relates his discomfiture. He took all the trouble to accompany Mimaleiyane a long way, right to her home, and received no reward for his gallantry. As well hoe a whole field and only plant one pea ! Lots of trouble for nothing !

A fourth category of enigmas comprises those in which it would seem that no real similarity of ideas exists, but merely a *similitude in sound*, a sort of graceful alliteration which is pleasing to the ear. The two following examples are very popular and very pretty as regards pronunciation :

He kumi nkuhlu, u wupfa-wupfa, ka ku sala huhlu yiñwe ?

— He kumi mulungu, a wondja-wondja, ka ku sala ndjepfu yiñwe.

We found a *nkuhlu* which ripens, which ripens ; only one nut is left ?

— We found a White man who gets thinner, thinner : nothing left but a hair of his beard.

The comparison of ideas is not difficult to perceive, but what conclusion, or moral can the author mean to convey ? None ! He has been led away by the musical charm of the words, and nothing else.

Lastly I would class in a final category *the enigmas which are altogether incomprehensible*, of which there are quite a large number.

Be khumbi ? — Mayo ! Ku fa.

The people against the wall ? — Ah ! if only I should die !

Zebedea, a very intelligent man, who gave me this enigma, could not tell me what it meant. Possibly the words may have been altered in course of transmission from generation to generation? I could not say. In any case the following fact does not encourage us to expend our energy in trying to discover meanings to the *psitekatekisana* when they are too obscure: several of these questions, or primary phrases, can be answered in different ways; the answer, or second phrase, varies with the informant. Suppose for instance, that the following question be put:

Makhoi ya nyari yinga-yinga?
The horns of the buffalo wander hither and thither?

The answer may be the well-known proverb (p. 22).

Unga bone bibi u ku ndji rimele.
Do not contemplate the heaps of weeds saying to thyself: I have finished hoeing.

Or it may be:

Barara ba bambe ndji nabela
I covet the fathers of other girls.

It may be that, in the parlour game previously described, when some one fails to give the right answer, he quotes the second sentence of another enigma on the spur of the moment, and so wrong connections are established between sentences which have no common meaning.

Are these *psitekatekisana* peculiar to our tribe, or are they to be met with elsewhere? I cannot be certain on this point, but I have not heard anything like them quoted from other places. Some bear a strong resemblance to the antithetic proverbs of Solomon. But it must be confessed that they entirely miss the deep religious or moral meaning of most of the Jewish proverbs!

1913 Rattray Hausa.pdf

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 01586376 4







Ans
R 2376h

HAUSA FOLK-LORE

CUSTOMS, PROVERBS, ETC.

COLLECTED AND TRANSLITERATED WITH ENGLISH
TRANSLATION AND NOTES

BY

R. SUTHERLAND RATTRAY, F.R.G.S., F.R.A.I.

OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD

ASSISTANT DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, ASHANTI, WEST AFRICA

AUTHOR OF 'CHINYANJA FOLK-LORE'

QUALIFIED INTERPRETER IN HAUSA, TŴI, CHINYANJA, MŌLE

IN TWO VOLUMES: VOL. II

OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1913

288706
13 - 6 - 33

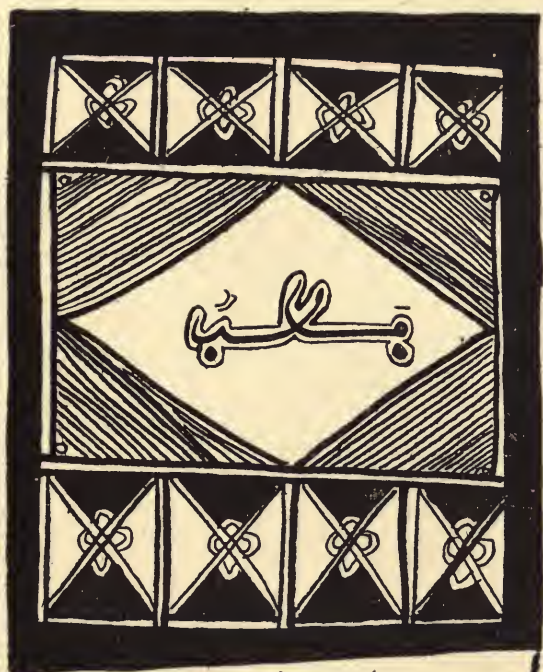
PART V
PROVERBS

Bābun.

Wanan bābi ne na sherbāchen magana
shi akan che, 'habaichi.' Mun fāra anan.

The Beginnings.

This is the beginning of words which are taken and jumbled up (that a man may not know their meaning), and such is called a '*habaichi*', proverb. We have here begun.



وَمِنْ لَدُنْكَ يَسْتَعِينُ
 شَمْسُكَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ شَمْسِ
 [REDACTED] آمَنَ

1. Bakin jini na ¹ muzūrū, mai-kāza zāgi, maras kāza zāgi.
 2. Hanunrwa ba gōrō ba, agulu ba nāma ba.
 3. Kafar agulu bāta mīa.
 4. Idan ka gani akwia makwanchin zāki, sai aji tsōrōnta.
 5. Idan ka gani zōmō shi na ² baje ³ bunga kare, ya gōyō dāmisa ne.
 6. ⁴ Agwāgwa ba ruanki da tsāfi.
 7. Hanchi bai san dādin gishiri ba.
 8. Abinda ke giwayan bāyan gida, zaa shi shiga gida ne.
 9. ⁵ Wa masani? Wa ya ki nasa, sai wāwa?
 10. Idan ⁶ kā kōri yārō shi-na-gudu, ka-na-binsa zaa shi shiga zaure ya kōmō, ya tsaya, ba banza ba, akwai ubansa ne.
-

1. The tom cat is a bad character, the owner of a fowl curses him, and he who has no fowl curses him.
2. The hanunrwa (nut) is not a real kola nut, (though like it), the vulture is not meat (i.e. you do not eat it).
3. The vulture's foot spoils the soup.
4. If you see a goat at the lion's sleeping-place, you fear her.
5. If you see a hare dancing on the dog's earth mound, you may be sure he is carrying a leopard on his back.
6. Duck, you have nothing to do with the sacrifice.
7. The nose does not know the flavour of the salt.
8. The thing (you see) going round the back of the house, it intends to enter the house.
9. Who knows best? Who hates his own relations, except a fool?
10. If you have chased a boy, (and) he runs off, (and) you follow him, (and) when he is just about to enter the porch leading to his house, he comes back (and) stands (waiting for you), he does not do that for nothing, his father is there.

يَكُنْجِي نَفْسَهُ وَرَوْقِيكَ إِذَا دَاغَ قَرْنُكَ إِذَا دَاغَ

قَسْرُ رُؤْيَا عَوْرُوتِ أَثْمَلِيَّةَ نَامَاتِ

عَقِبَ رَأْمِلُ بَاتِمِ

۱۔ زکفینہ آگس مکواتینہ ایک سڑا بطور وند

إِذْ كَفَيْتُمْ مَوْشَىٰ بَعْلُومَ كَبْرَىٰ تَعْمُودًا إِسْبَابِلَ

اغوا غزوئک دطایر

قَتْلُ يَهُوَنَّاخَ بْنِ نَبِيَّ

أَشْهَدُ بِكَ فَوَيْتَ بِأَيِّ نِعْمَةٍ إِذَا نَشَرْتَ شَفَاعَةَ ابْنِ

واقعتیہ وایتیک ناس ٹیڑواوا

اِذْ كَاكُرْتُمْ تَا۟رِوَا۟ نُنَادِكُمْ فَا۟نۡشُرْكُمْ اِذۡ تَتَذَكَّرُو۟نَ ۗ

يَكُونُ يَكْرِيَانِ ابَا كَوِيْلٍ يَنْتَشِرُ

11. Dāmanā mai-ban sāmu.
12. Rashin farin wata, tām̄rārō ke haske.
13. Rashin uwa, akan yi uwar dāki.
14. Kūsū ne ba shi gida, dōmin hakanan su ke ajia barkatai.
15. ⁷Kiñwa che ba ta gida, dōmin hakanan bēra ke gāda.
16. Ai wāne kifin rijia ne.
17. Nāma mai-wāri shi-ka-kāma kūra.
18. Sānia ashāfanta ake-yi, tun ba afāra twātsanta ba.
19. Gātari da wuta, mai-wiar rātaya.
20. Lizāme da wuta māganin tsayayan dōki.
21. Kāza mai-yāya, ita ke tsōrō shirwa.

11. It is the rainy season that gives wealth.
12. When the moon is not full, the stars are bright.
13. If one has not a mother of one's own, one makes one whom one calls one's 'house-mother'.
14. There is not a rat in the house, that is why the things are left scattered about just anyhow.
15. The cat is not at home, because of that the mice are playing.
16. No, So-and-so is a fish from a well. (A shy man.)
17. It is the stinking bit of meat that catches the hyena.
18. They pat the cow before they begin to milk her.
19. A (red)-hot axe is difficult to carry on the shoulder.
20. A hot bit is the cure for a stubborn horse.
21. It is the hen with chickens that fears the hawk.

هَامَا مَيْتِي سَام

رَشِي قِرْنُوْت تَقْرَارُو كَسْبُو

رَشِي عَمُوَا كَثِي مَوْرَدَا

كُوش بِي بَا شِفَا اِدُو مِرْ كَسْر سَكْر اِدُو بَرَكْنِي

كِنُوَان بَا لَفَا اِدُو مِرْ كَسْر بَرَا كَفَا اِدَا

اَهْ وَابُو كِي فِي رِي جِيَابُو

نَام مَيَّوَار شِي كَلَام كُورَا

تَرَانِيَا اَشَا فَنَتَا كُو تَرِيَا قَارْتُوَا طَنَب

مَمَائِرَهْ دُوْتَا مَرُوْتِي رَانِي

بَرَامُوْدُوْتَا مَا بِنِي طَيِّيْرُو كُو

كَادَا مَرِيَا يَا اِتْ كَطُوْرُو شَرُو

22. Tsōrō na dāji, kumya ta-na gida.
23. ⁸ Akwia taa yi wāyō da yankaken kunne.
24. Idan mūgun mutun ya shibka zanba, kai ka sa lauje ka yanke.
25. Tantabara dūkīa sama, idan kin tāshi, Ala ka kāwō ki gida.
26. Idan da kamar nika, kwādō ya fi kwāgūa.
27. ⁹ Gātari ga nāma, nāma ga wuta.
28. A shekara sāran rua, sai tanbatse.
29. Gumāgumai ka kwāna da wuta, kirārua sai tōka.
30. Rīmi tsakar gida, rānan sāra mutānen gida na kuka, na waje na murna.
31. Yārō ya so aure, ¹⁰ gidansu bābu gōdīa.
32. ¹¹ Adāwa ba ta hana sāmu ba.

22. Terror is a thing of the wilds, shame of the home (the abode of men).
23. The goat will learn sense by having its ears slit.
24. If a bad man has sown evil, do you set your sickle to it and cut it down.
25. Pigeon, your riches (food) are in the sky ; when you have risen aloft, Allah it is who brings you back home.
26. If it is a matter of grinding corn (between two stones) the frog should be better at it than the crab.
27. Axe, there is the meat ; meat, there is the fire.
28. Though one were to spend a year hacking at water (one would make no impression on it) it only splashes up (and is still again).
29. (If you have) a big log you have a fire beside you all night, if a stick, then ashes only.
30. The silk cotton tree in the middle of the compound, on the day it is cut down the people of the house grieve, outsiders rejoice.
31. The boy wants to marry, but at their (his) house there is no mare (he has no money).
32. Because a person hates you, that does not prevent you getting what you want.

طوړ و ناء اچ ځمقو تشا مخدا

اكو تاي وايوا د ښكې كښل

يا د مومن مشر يا ښك د تب كو ځسا لوبو كښلو

تښتراد و كو سم ا د ئكناش آ ځكاوو ك مخدا

ا د د ځمقو نك ځوا د و ايا و ځوا عوا

عما لير عا نام نام عا و اتي

ا ښك سار نرو اسو تښتون

عما عمن ځوا ن د و نا كرا رو سونو ځو

ر به طكو مخدا از اتر سارا متا نر مخدا انا كو كو نوبو نامرن

يا رو يا سو غور يو مخدا نر يا ب خود يا

ع د او يا نر سا موب

33. Jia Ka raba yau aka-ba mu.
34. Zaman dūnia hakuri, mai-kīa sun fi ma-sōya.
35. Domin ¹² dan karamin tsuguni nan, ba shi yi mani kōmi.
36. Aki marada, azamna da wa?
37. Ma-aikata da 'wai', zunubinku ka dadu.
38. ¹³ Lalē mai-saurin kāmu.
39. Gingidin kunāma, kōwa ya taba, shi sha kāshi.
40. Mai-hali, mai-sābō.
41. Ala ke da rabō, daa mutun ke da rabō, daa wani bai sāmu ba.
42. Ala ya gīāra rīmi, chidia ta bar fushi
43. Harāra bai māri ba.
44. ¹⁴ Idānun da ya gani sarki ba shi tsōrō gāladīma.

33. Yesterday You (Allah) portioned out (good and evil fortune), to-day we shall be given (our share).

34. Live patiently in the world; (know that) those who hate you are more numerous than they who love you.

35. Because of these few people (shall I desist)? they cannot harm me.

36. If you refuse to live with the slanderer, whom are you going to live with?

37. You who condemn on hear-say evidence alone, your sins increase.

38. Henna stains quickly.

39. The snoozing scorpion, whoever touches it (quickly) gets a blow.

40. He who is naturally gifted in anything becomes expert in it.

41. Allah has the portioning out (of blessings), if it was man who had the distribution of them, some would go without.

42. Allah made the (great) silk cotton tree beautiful, let the (little) chidia tree cease being angry (discontented).

43. A frown is not a slap, (it does not hurt).

44. The eyes that beheld the chief do not fear the *galadīma* (a court official).

بِتِي كَرَبِ يَوَا كَام

دَمَنُ وَتِيَا كَرَبِ يَكِيَا سَنُ قَسُو يَا

دَمُونِ نَكَمِ كَفَر نَرِيَا شِيَمِ كَوْمِ

اَكْفَر دَا اَدَمَر دَو

مَلَا يَكَا دَو نَرِيَا نَبُكَا دَا

لَبُو مَيَسُور نَكَام

نَمُفَدِ نَكَام كَوُوا يَتَبِ شَشَا كَا شَم

مَرَحَلِ مَيَسَا بُو

اَلَكِي دَرِيَا اَدَمُ شَكِي دَرِيَا اَوِي تَيَسَا مَوِي

اَلِيَا عِيَا رِيَمِ نَدِيَا تَبْرِ فَيَشِ

حَرَارَا بَا قَارِيَتِ

اِدَا نَرِيَا يَفَعِ سَرَكِ بَا شَطُور وَا غَلَا دِيَمِ

45. Mai-chiniki chikin dufu, kai dai jimri lalabe.
46. Dainyan kaskō wanda ba shi kai rua bai' dāki.
47. Murfu uku ba shi kāsa wa yārō rīga.
48. Tūō tūlū mai-wīar kwāshēwa da ¹⁵ māra.
49. Munduwar wīa, ana-sō zārēwa, ana tsōrō jin chiwo.
50. Wanda bai sha kāshi ba, ba shi jin bari.
51. Mai-lāmuni, shi ne ma-bachi.
52. Mai-dādin kai shi-na-fitō daga Ala.
53. Wanda ya bi ki, ya bi iska.
54. Gangara kōgi, mu je Zāria.
55. Har shi mutu ba shi kula kaba.

45. The man who works at his business in the dark must always be feeling about with his hands.

46. An unburned earthen pot is not one to bring water in behind the house.

47. The three cooking-stones (i.e. the family) do not fail to give the boy a coat.

48. The food in the pot with the narrow neck is difficult to take out with the 'māra' (spoon) (a flat bit of a broken calabash).

49. The ornamental metal rings round the neck, when one wants to take them off, one cannot, for fear of hurting the person.

50. One who has never had a flogging will not pay any attention when you merely tell him to stop.

51. He who goes surety is (often) the one who has to pay.

52. The truly contented man comes from Allah.

53. He who follows you (the advice given) follows the wind.

54. Here is the river bank, let us slide down and go to Zāria.

55. Till he dies he will not twist a 'kaba' palm-leaf even.
(He is good for nothing.)

مَنْ يَكُنْ فِي كَيْدِي جَمْرًا لِلْبُيُوتِ

دَنْيَا كَسَكُو وَنَمَّ بَاشَرَكِي رَوَانِيَا كَا

مَرْدَاكُ بَاشَرَكَا سَوِيَا زَوِيَا رِيَا

تَوُو رُو لُوَا مَيُو يَزَكُوَا شَوَا دَمَارَا

مَنْ وَرُو مَنَا سَوَا دَمَارَا طُورُ وَجَرُ شِيُو

وَنَمَّ يَنْشَا كَا شِيَبَ بَاشَرَكِي بَر

مَيَا مَن شِيَبَر مَيَا

مَيَا دَنَكِي شِيَا فَوَا دَمَارَا

وَنَمَّ يَنْشَا كَا شِيَبَ بَاشَرَكِي

مَنْ وَرُو مَنَا سَوَا دَمَارَا

مَنْ وَرُو مَنَا سَوَا دَمَارَا

56. Idan ba ka shan fūra, bari dāma ta.
57. Māgani yā kāre ana-¹⁶gudin jan jika.
58. Dūtsi afar maka bābu dādi, ka far ma mutun bābu dādi.
59. Makwanchin zāki dāmisa na haushi.
60. Suturan Ala tā yi gaba, ama mazambachi ya bi ya gaji.
61. Mutun ba shi sani wada laifi dūnia shi ke ba, kō bāba da bābānai.
62. Kuyenga yi magana, che ba ki kāra kai tāki bākin marmarō.
63. Harāra da ya tsuna ba shi tādā gofna shi na bākin mashāya.
64. Kumurchi yai hadia, bai hadi ba, anmātse bāki, ya tudas.
65. Kō dawuri nā fadi dāria 'ga ta yi yawa, barna achiki.
66. Wanda bai yi tārā kāshi ba ya chiji shākiraka, kar ka ji tārā
mājina chiji hanchinsa.

56. If you are not going to drink the pap, stop stirring it.
57. When the medicine (in the medicine bag) is finished, (the doctor) runs away for fear they snatch the bag from him.
58. You, O stone, if a man falls on you, it is not pleasant, if you fall on a man, it is not pleasant (for him).
59. The leopard envies the lion's resting-place.
60. The blessing of Allah goes before, but the evildoer follows it in vain till he is weary.
61. A man does not know what evil there is in the world be he (your) father or father's brother (i.e. old and full of experience).
62. Slave girl, speak ; say you will not carry the sweepings of the house to the spring, any more. (Meaning obscure.)
63. A scowling look will not cause the 'gofna (?)' to rise up from the drinking-place.
64. When the python is swallowing (anything), but has not yet finished swallowing, and they squeeze its mouth, it vomits it up.
65. From the first I maintained that this excessive laughter had evil as its cause.
66. He who is not averse to eating excrement, and therefore bites you on the anus, as for you, do not be squeamish about mucus, but bite him on the nose.

اِذْ نَبَا كُشْنُ فِرَافِرٍ اِمَاثَ

مَا مَعْنَى يَا كَابِرُ اَنَا غُذُ نَجَاحُ

دَوِطَ اَجَزْ مَكَبَابُ اِدَءَ كَبَرُ مَقْشَرٍ اِدَءَ

مَكُونُ نَزْدَاكُ اِمَسْرَنَا قَوْشُ

لَسْتُ زَا لَ اَلْمَرْغَبِ اَقَامَهُ نُبْتَعِ يَابِ يَابِ

مَشْرِطَ شَسْرٍ دَلِيهِ دُونِي شَكْبُ كَوْبَابُ دَبَابَانِي

خَيْفُ يَمْفَرْتَبَا كَارِ كَوْنَاكُ بَا كَرْمَرُو

مَرَارِدِ يَابِطِ بَا شَرَا دُ مَعْفَرُ شَنَا بَا كَرْمَشَانِي

كُفْرَتِي يُونُحِي يَابِ حَيْبِ اَنْقَاطِ يَابِ يَابِ نَش

كُفْرَتِي يُونُحِي يَابِ حَيْبِ اَنْقَاطِ يَابِ يَابِ نَش

وَنَبِيْرَتَا رَا شَيْبَا يَبِيْجِ شَا كَرَكُ كَوْنُ كَجِ نَارَ مَا يَبَا يَبِيْجِ مَشِيْشِ

67. Ala ba Ka da kēta, gōnar māye rua Ka-ke-yi.
68. Ai Hausa ba dabō ba che.
69. Baban kai ba kāya ba ne.
70. Namiji tankwa ne, sai antamna akan-san mai-yāji.
71. Haba yi hankali, ai ba dukan tafasa ta ke nuna da nāman kai ba.
72. Tūō na iyāli, nāma na mai-gida.
73. Kad alūra ta tōnō galma.
74. Sankara bātā gōria.
75. Gōria mai-tankwa sankara ba ta chi ba.
76. Uwar dīa da dīa tata, du' ka san ba ka gama su ka aure ba.
77. Shi wanda ke jiran kabaki baba, kā san ba ya tsaya jira ta da lōmaḡba.

67. Allah, You have no evil, You make the rain to fall even on the wizard's garden.

68. Oh, no, Hausa is not a conjuring trick (it is easy to learn).

69. A big head is not a big load (a conceited man not necessarily a wealthy one).

70. A man is like a pepper, till you have chewed it, you do not know how hot it is.

71. Come, be patient, not all the boiling will cook the meat on a head.

72. The 'tūō' (food made of grain) is for the household, the meat (a greater delicacy) is for the master of the house.

73. Do not let a needle turn up a hoe (a mountain out of a mole-hill).

74. The 'sankara' insect spoils the big kola nut.

75. The big kola nut, sprinkled with ground pepper, the 'sankara' insect does not eat.

76. The girl's mother, and her daughter, both you know you cannot join together and marry.

77. He who is waiting for a huge helping, you have known is not going to stand and wait for a handful.

آلَن كِه كُتَّ غَوَرَمَ اِيں رَوَاكِي

اَه قَوَس بَاد بَوِيث

بَنَر كَنِيَا كَا يَابِي

بُيچ لَنگَوَانِي سَرَا شَمَرَا كَنَس قَوِيَام

تَبِي يَكَلِي اَه بَاد كَن بَافَس تَكُونَتَا قَامَل كِي

تَوُوو نِيَا لَنَام تَمِيغَا

كَا لَوَر تَوُوو عَمَلِي

سَنگَرَا بَا تَر غَوَرِي

غَوَرِي مِيَنگَوَا سَنگَرَا بَا تَب

غَوَرِي دِي دِيَا تَتَا دُو كَا سَر تِيَا عَمَاش كَا وَرِي

لَنِيُونَتَا كِي رَز كِي كِي بَت كَا لَن يِيَا طِي جَرَا دَلُو مَآي

78. Aja mu akai mu, anba uwar makāfo kāshi.
 79. Mazō gaba yā yi kō, na bāya sai lābāri.
 80. Kututūre dabīnō ba kamar kututūre kirya ba.
 81. Farfarū likāfū kō afāda, sai yan sarki.
 82. Kōmi chau tafarnūa, ba ta yi kamar albasa ba.
 83. Matanbayi ba shi rasa huja ba, sai ya ki jin abinda ka nūna mai.
 84. Me kare gōma ke yi da kūra?
 85. Wanda bai bāta dare ba, bai abata da rāna ba.
 86. Bakin būnū bāta baibaia.
 87. Rugurugu baban dafūa.

78. Let them pull me, let them take me there, (that is what) the blind man (says) when (he hears) his mother is being beaten.

79. The one in front has reached there, the one behind only hears about it.

80. The date-tree stump is not like the stump of the kirya-tree.

81. Silver stirrups even (when you see them) at the chief's courtyard, it is the chief's son who has them. (There are plenty of rich and powerful people about, but none of them have the privilege of having silver stirrups.)

82. However fine the garlic may be, it is never like the onion.

83. The questioner does not inquire without good cause unless he refuses to hear what you tell him.

84. What can ten dogs do with a hyena?

85. He who does not get lost by night, will not get lost by day.

86. Old grass spoils a roof.

87. Thunder is a mighty (pot) boiling.

أَجَامُ أَكَيْمُ أَنْبَا عَزَمَ أَفْوَاكُ أَشْ

مَدُّ وَتَبِيَّ بِيكُو تَبِيَّ سَنَ لَا بَارِ

كُشْرُ بِيَّوَا بَا كَمَرُ كُشْرُ كُنْ بَا بَا

قَزِ قَزِو لِكَا أَفْوَا كُوَ أَجَاءَ سَعِي يَنْتَرِي

كُوْمُ ثَوَّ بَزِ ثَوَّ بَزِوَا بِيَّوَا كَمَرُ أَتِيَّ بَا بَا

مَنْتَبِيَّ بِيَّوَا سَلَفُ أَجَاءَ سَعِي بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا

مَنْتَبِيَّ بِيَّوَا سَلَفُ أَجَاءَ سَعِي بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا

وَنَدَ بِيَّوَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا

بِيَّوَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا

رَغْرَغْ بِيَّوَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا بَا

88. Mu kwankwanbishi ne ba yāda gātari.
89. Mai-shanyayen gindi ke da kwatana tasa bābu mai-kwāche masa.
90. Mun san juna, kai mu yā yi dai dai.
91. Mahasada ku bar gajia, yārō yā geterē.
92. Tābarman kashi, madājin karfē, machi awazain kato.
93. Kifin fadama ba shi gāsa da na gulbi.
94. Wāne ya haye tudu ya bar na gangare sai lēkē.
95. Idan kun sō mun yi kō, idan ba ku sō ba mun yi ko sarautar ala tā issa.
96. Tudun mahasada abi shi da sūnan Ala.
97. Fada ma kia, Ala yā fi su.
98. ¹⁷ Wīar nika pashi, idan anpasa wīar nika tā kārē.

88. We are (like) the little biting ants (on trees) that (when you go to cut a tree down fall on you) and make you throw away the axe.

89. No one can pull off the girdle from another, even if he has no buttocks. (One has a right to what is one's own.)

90. We know one another, our heads have made one.

91. Slanderer, cease tiring yourself out, the boy has crossed (i.e. I am beyond your reach and power now).

92. A mat made of bones, edged with metal, is the thing to eat into the shoulders of even a huge man.

93. The fish from the well does not make itself the equal of that from the river.

94. So-and-so has climbed the hill and left the one on the slope peering up at him.

95. If you wished us to prosper, even so we have prospered, if you did not wish it, even so we have prospered, the kingdom of Allah has been sufficient (for us).

96. The hill of the slanderer, (when you take that way) follow it with the name of Allah (on your lips).

97. Say to them who hate you, Allah is more powerful than they.

98. The hard part of grinding is the first grinding, when that is done the rest is easy.

مُو كُنْشِي نِي بَا يَادِ عَائِرِ

مِي شِي نِي عَمِي كِه كَتَا تَسْ بَا دِي كُو اَنبَس

مَسْ جِي نُو كِي مِ يَلِي دِي يِي نِي

هَسَدَا كُتْرِ عَجِي يَارُو تَا عَجَرِي

تَا بَر مَكَشِي مَدَا مِرْ كَرِي وَ مَشِي وَ زَرِي كَا لَوَا

كِي مِ قَدَمِ بَا شِي عَا سَرِ دِي عُلِي

وَ اَنُو يَا حِي رُ تَا يَارُو نَقَرِ لَسَرِ لِي كُو

اَدَرِ كُشُو اَمِي كُو اَدَرِ نِي كُشُو بَا مِي كُو اَسَرُو تَرِ اَلَا س

تَا نَهَسَدَا اِي شَرِ دِي شُو تَرِ اَل

قَدَا مَكِي اَل يَا وِي ش

وَنِي نِي كِي شَرِ اَدَرِ اَنبَس وَ نِي نِي كِي تَا كَرِي

99. Daga kan fāko kōma kan dabe.
 100. Iyāka kurji, iyāka ruansa.
 101. Kai ba shi wuche wīa, wīa kūa ba shi wuchi kai.
 102. Idan da kamar nika, kwādō ya fi kusa da kasa
 103. Tsānin tsāni ke nan kuwar kuwa.
 104. Duba shi, shi-na-sumumu kamar tūsa achikin gōra.
 105. Idan kīfi ya fitō rua, ya che, idānun kada guda ne wa ke musu ?
 106. Wāne mai-karangīar hanū ne.
 107. Yau wāne ya fāda fako.
 108. Garwāshin wāne ya hababaka.
 109. Wāne daga tafō na tafō shii zama zumunta ?
-

99. From a hard bare piece of ground, to come to a hard beaten floor (six and half a dozen).

100. The limit of a sore is the limit to which the matter from the sore spreads.

101. The head does not go on and leave the neck behind, nor the neck the head.

102. If it was a matter of grinding grain (between two stones) the frog should be the best at it, it is so close to the ground (but it is not).

103. A ladder above a ladder, a friend's friend.

104. Look at him, he is as sulky as a 'tusa' circulating round a calabash.

105. If the fish comes out of the water, and says the eyes of the crocodile are one in number, who is going to argue with him ?

106. So-and-so is like the 'karangiar' thorn (he clutches hold of everything).

107. To-day So-and-so has fallen on a hard place. (Met with a greedy person.)

108. So-and-so's cinders are flaring up. (He is in a rage.)

109. So-and-so has come (from far away), I have come (we have met), does that make us relations ?

دَعَوْكُمْ كَمَا كُنْتُمْ
 إِلَيْكُمْ كَمَا كُنْتُمْ
 كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَمَا كُنْتُمْ
 كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَمَا كُنْتُمْ
 كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَمَا كُنْتُمْ
 كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَمَا كُنْتُمْ
 كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ كَمَا كُنْتُمْ
 كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ

- 110. Mai-kāza ba shi jimrim as !
- 111. Ala shi sa akwia ta sha kunu sanbiru.
- 112. Ala shi tsarīmu da mai-kai-kōmō.
- 113. Da wīa ni kidan ganga da lauje.
- 114. Idan kā ji ganga ta-na-zāki, ta kusa pashēwa.
- 115. Bāko ba bāwa ba sai ya sō.
- 116. Chin bāshi da dādi, rānan bia da wīa.
- 117. Abu ne mutun, idan ba ka da abu, bābu mai-sō ka.
- 118. Inuan bagārūa, ga sainyi, ga kaya.
- 119. Talaka ba shi abōki.
- 120. Me gara ka yi da dūtsi sai ta kwāna gewayā ?

110. The owner of a fowl is sure to be angry with any one who says shu ! (though it may not be his fowl that is being chased).

111. Allah causes the goat to drink the 'sanbiru' (poison) pap.

112. Allah protect us from the tell-tale.

113. It is difficult to beat a drum with a sickle.

114. If you hear the drum sounds sweet, (you can be sure) it is near to the time it will split.

115. A stranger is not a slave, unless he voluntarily becomes one.

116. To borrow is sweet (easy), the day of payment is hard.

117. Things (wealth) is the man (so it seems); if you have nothing no one loves you.

118. Shade of the 'bagarua' tree, behold coolness, behold thorns.

119. A poor man has no friend.

120. What has the ant to do with a stone (it cannot eat it) (they) it can only lie round it ?

مَيْكَادُ ابْنِ جَمِيرٍ رَأْسُ

أَلْشَّيْءِ أَكْبَرُ تَشَاكُنُوا سَنِيْرُوا

أَلْشَّيْءِ بِمِمْ مَوْكِيْكُمْ مَوْ

مَوْ يَأْتِيْكُمْ نَفَقَةٌ لَوْ جِي

إِذْ رَكِبَ مُمْفَرٌ تَنَارًا كَيْ تَأْكُسَ قَيْشُوا

بَاكُوا بَابًا وَابَةً تَسْرِيَا سُوا

يَنْتَبِشُ دَادُ رَاتِيْ دَوْيَا

أَبُو بَقْرٍ رَزَاكُمُ آدُ بَادُ مَيْسُوكَ

إِنُوتِبَقَارُوا مَسْجِدُ عَمَاكِي

بَلَكُ بَا شَابُوكَ

مَيْفَرَا كَانُ دُوطِ سَرَتِكُوا نَعْمَوِي

121. Māganin kōmi Ala.
 122. Abu duka shi-na ga wa? Shi-na ga Ala.
 123. Ba reshi ga Ala.
 124. ¹⁸ Dākin kasa da kasa, gōbara tai kumya.
 125. Ba aure ke da wīa ba, bidan kurdi.
 126. Ai sama ba ta kōmō kasa harabadi, tudu ba shi kōmōwa gangare.
 127. Dutsi ba shi zama rua.
 128. Akwia ba ta gāsā da kura.
 129. Bāwa ba shi gāsā da yāya.
 130. Bawan ¹⁹ Māku dai dai da Māku.
 131. Idan sarki ya che, kōwa shi yi kūka shi chika masaki
 da hawāye, kai mai-idānū guda dai, fāra tun dawuri.

121. Allah is the cure for all (ills).
 122. To whom does everything belong? to Allah.
 123. There is no not getting a thing if you seek it from Allah.
 124. A house of nothing but mud, the conflagration (turns away) in shame.
 125. It is not the act of marrying that is difficult, it is getting the money (to marry).
 126. No, the heavens do not ever come down to the earth, the hills do not come down to the valleys.
 127. A stone does not become water.
 128. A goat does not make itself the equal of the hyena.
 129. A slave does not make himself the equal of a free man.
 130. The slave of Māku is one with Māku.
 131. If the chief commands that every one is to weep and fill a calabash with tears, do you, who have only one eye, begin from the very first.

فَانْعَمِ كَوْمِ آل

اَبَدَكْ شِنَاغُوا شِنَاغَمَآل

بَارِشِ عَمَّآل

دَاكِزْ كَسَاءْ كَسَاغُو بَرَاتُو كُفِيَا

بَاغُورُ كَلْتُو يَابْ بَاغُورُ دَا

آءْ لَلَمْ بَاكُومْ كَسَرْتَرَا بَدْتَرَا شِكُومْ وَاعْمَقُورُ

دَوِطْ بَا شَدْمَرْوَا

آكُو بَا شَفَا سَاءْ كُورَا

بَاوَا بَا شَفَا سَاءْ يَابَا

بَاوَنَمَاكْ دَنِيَّةْ مَكْ

يَا دَرَشَرَكْ يَنْتْ كُورُوا شِي كُورُوا شِي كَمْ مَسَاكْ

دَوَايُو كُورَا دَانُوا مَحْدَا دِي قَارَا شَدْمَرْوَا

132. Rabon kunkuru ba shi chikin wuta.

133. Kurtun zuma, gama da madāchi.

²⁰ Tamat.

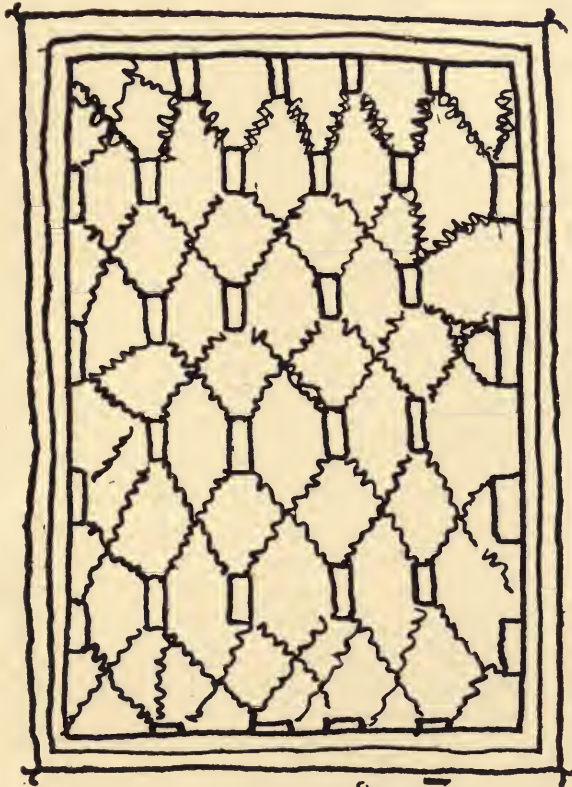
132. The share of the turtle is not found in the fire.

133. A pot of honey mixed with bitter herbs.

Finis.

رَبُّوْكُمْ كُنُوْا تَكْرُوْا

كُنُوْا تَكْرُوْا



تَقَاتُ

1913 Thomas Ibo.pdf

ANTHROPOLOGICAL REPORT
ON THE
IBO-SPEAKING PEOPLES OF NIGERIA.

BY
NORTHCOTE W. THOMAS, M.A., F.R.A.I., ETC.,
GOVERNMENT ANTHROPOLOGIST.

PART III.

PROVERBS, NARRATIVES,
VOCABULARIES AND GRAMMAR.

LONDON: #
2) HARRISON AND SONS.

1913.

(Copyright.)

PROVERBS.

THESE proverbs were collected rather early in my tour, mainly from my own Staff; as far as possible they have been revised later; but in some cases the proverbs were unknown to my later informants and some obscurities remain, marked with a ?, which are possibly due to erroneous transcription.

Proverbs from Awka are distinguished by A, those from Onitsha by O; where no letter stands, the same proverb is known in both places.

PROVERBS.

1. Inu bu ábubq ẹ́jì ẹ́lì ókú (A).

The proverb is the leaf that they use to eat a word.

That is to say a proverb explains the meaning.

2. Atolu ọ́ka, ọ́mwale; mwa atolu ọ́fẹ́ke, ofenye aka n'ofia (A).

They advise a wise man and he knows, but a fool waves his hand towards the bush.

- Aṭolo ọ́ka, omalo; aṭolo obodi, ofẹ́jì aká (O).

They advise a clever man, he knows, a fool is advised and snaps his fingers.

WEALTH AND POVERTY.

3. Nkíta si na mwadu bu ndi ñwẹ́l' ikè na fa amwara nq (O).

The dog says that men are those who have rumps and cannot sit down.

A wealthy man cannot eat much and cannot enjoy his wealth.

4. Ebube ǎgò neče ǎgò (O).

Fear of the leopard is the leopard's defence.

An important man is feared.

5. Ife okenye n'ani fo, ñwata kulqtq ny'áfqnia (A).

Things that a big man sits down to see, a small boy does not see even if he stands up.

6. Atulú sẹle : ñkíta, ñwanneya, naiya tẹl'nsi abǒgi ; na gi ẹrata nsi aboiya (A).

The sheep says : dog my brother, he is (I am) patient to get a share of you ; you are not patient to get a share of him (me).

If the younger brother spoils the things of the elder he is forgiven, but if the elder does so he has to pay.

7. Efí obẹl' onye mwol' ẹboa, ase n' qbul' alo (A).

The cow of a small man has twins, they say it is forbidden.

A favourite son can do what others are not allowed to do.

8. Onye bainye si : kákwo mili k'qdi n' qbolona, maka qvẹ ñkpẹliụkwu (O).

A countryman says, let them take water when it reaches the middle of his leg, because it is coming as far as the knee.

When a small man offends an important man.

9. Ẹbujerem mpuma onye oke, mwa ẹinagaralom (?) oye ñkpilísi (A).

I never broke another man's knife, and carried the half to Oye market.

If a big man dies and his property is lost, the son will accuse others : the head man of the family will say that he is not guilty.

10. Iliru nabọ nẹbu qgalainya (A).

Oliru nabo nẹbu okenye (O).

Eating two sides kills a big man.

If one rich man tries to divert money that should go to another big man.

11. Enyi nẹto, ńtiya anasa (A).

Enyi nakba, ńtiya anāsa (O).

The elephant grows, and his ears grow.

A rich man gets richer and richer.

12. Onye ñwe ego bụ oyi ñbie (O).

Those who have money are friends of each other.

13. Oinyala si na nşúşú bu nşúşú ; makayá ojisu unq wẹfo obẹle 'ma, qnačqba mbweri (A).

The madman says : burning is burning, that's why I burn the house to find my small knife that I have been looking for a long time.

A man begs his rich brother to help him, but in vain, but if a big man begs his brother for him, he succeeds.

14. Obwenye adakpa okbà n' obwq akele (O).

A poor man does not put his basket in the boat of the big drum.

Poor and rich cannot be friends.

15. Ikwusí ikwusí dqba okbà n' afia ; egù atoba obwenye (A).

Ikpeti ikpeti ju afia, egù edekwe obwenye adoiny' obà (O).

The rich man puts down his basket in the market, the poor man fears.

A small man must know his place.

16. Abwesi šiele akbi n' qbul' yarakali, mwa ya ababwo mwade (A).

The ant says to the scorpion : if he (I) were as big as you, he (I) would sting a person to death.

A poor man can say this to a rich man.

17. Azu kali ázu, qñwqr' ázu no (O).

One fish surpasses another fish. It catches a fish and swells.

The rich man oppresses the poor man.

18. Óbwenye ti akụ ta ; ási : ofol' nni n'ẹbe ; mw' qgalainya ti akụ ta, ási : hia ; n'qgobugie otadebqdo qnaro (O).

Poor man breaks and bites a palm nut ; they say : he has got some food here, a rich man breaks a nut and eats it ; they say : Ah ! He wants it very much, it's years since he had one.

A rich man can do what a poor man can't.

19. Akum nà wà obwò, si : mwa ya ẹkpẹlobwò, amata selu mili (O).

The hippopotamus that breaks the canoe says, if he were steersman the paddle would float in the water.

A big man can do as he pleases.

20. Obwenye bụ ñwata (O).

The poor man is a child.

Big man decide things.

21. Ịkpe adam' ẹze (O).

Judgment does not catch a king.

The court will not decide against him.

22. Otóm aguńkwò na ñke ẹbwé ádei ; aguńkwò bul' ọkoko, ñtóm akbò' (O).

Shouting kite and shouting hawk is not the same : the kite carries off a fowl. I shout loud.

A big man can't be sold in the market.

23. Otiti ikolíko ti na bẹze ; ọtie bọkpala, otitíe mbambafo (O).

There is much praise in the king's house. If it resounds in the poor man's place it hits his stomach and makes it flat.

A king can do things that a poor man cannot.

24. Ainya adigo oinyala kaya li ñgwẹle ; n'obụ ụnọ di okụ (O).

The madman's eyes looked greedily at the lizard, but there was a (? no) house near.

A poor man would like to be rich.

25. Oke mwade ñwuru, ọbia ábwata (A).

A rich man dies, mourning comes in.

Oke mwadu ñwuru, oḣwe ẹiri (O).

A rich man dies, the quarter is shut.

26. Akpakqb' ọko r'oliya, ñbẹku, ñwannega ; mwa nabu ọkoko, bũku qwa (O).

Heap of fire roasts the tortoise, son of Anega, if it were a fowl there is very much bamboo.

Troubles that overwhelm a rich man would overwhelm a poor man.

27. *Ẹlilí ọ́bá nàmi ọ́bà (O).*

The rope of a chief brings prosperity.

The son of a rich man hopes to be rich himself.

28. *Ẹwata akwọ́ n' azí amwara n' iḡe náfòfò (A).*

The child which is carried on the back doesn't know that travelling is a labour.

To a spendthrift son.

29. *Ẹwá ọ́galáinya amag' ife ; oliḡsọ akú ñkẹ́ nnaiya gbatalu ; omal' ifè, ọ́gbat' akú akaiya ; mbwè nnaiya ñwurulu, oli ñke nnaiya, oli ñkeya, obùe dika nnaiya (A).*

The son of a rich man knows nothing, he eats only the property which his father collects, but if he learns sense, he collects property in his hand ; when his father is dead, he eats his father's own property, and he eats his own. He is as his father.

30. *Ọ́koko ọ́lọ n'ọ́gabú oke emẹ́sẹ́lú obulú ñwunye ; afonqro ñka (O).*

The hen thinks that she will be a cock after being a hen ; that's never been seen.

A big man's child may be a fool.

31. *Ẹfí sí niya dı́ mwa iḡe iḡe, niya aderomwa ẹ́zú afia (O).*

The cow says she is good for walking. She is no good for trading in the market.

A big man's son need not work.

32. *Ọ́cì ọ́sọ́ etu fu akú, amwara na ọ́gú n'ọ́koka dol' onye gbataleya (A).*

He spends quickly such property as he sees. He does not know that the thorn pierces him who collects property.

If the son of a rich man does not work he is poor when his father dies.

33. *Ẹwẹ́wu sí kà ñniye b' ọ́ru,* nya b' ọ́ru (O).*

The kid says his mother is a slave, but he is not a slave.

The son of a rich man may come down in the world.

* The ordinary toning is ọ́ru.

34. Adụ nnụ, ẹjid' ẹfi (A).

There are four hundred, and can't catch a cow.

Foolish sons can't tread in their father's footsteps.

MASTER AND SERVANT.

35. Óru ánaraka di ñwēniye (A).

Óru ádaka di ñwēniya (O).

The slave is not more than his master.

The child is less than his father.

36. Ony' ẹzili ẹzi anaraka onye zilye (A).

Ony' ẹzili' ẹzi adaka onye ziliye (O).

He who is sent as messenger is not greater than he who sends him.

The servant is not greater than his master.

37. Nuku ẹhwēni ẹovanta, anụ abwanare, siáfa; onye asi :
dẹke, kambwa; ibi' ase : dẹke, kambwa (O).

Big hunters go hunting; animals run past them; one says :
wait till I shoot; the other says : wait till I shoot.

Two cannot be master.

38. Qgo nakọ ani, ani anarakọ qgo (A).

Qgo nẹj' ani, ani adeje qgo (O).

The hoe goes towards the earth, not the earth towards the hoe.

The master, not the servant, decides.

39. Itá nni bụ ntì (O).

To chew food is the work of the jaw.

You must recognize superiors.

40. Nsilekọ si ndemwọ : onye fodolo ụzọ, fobá mwọ (O).

The bush cat says to the Mwọ : who sees the road, sees the Mwọ.

If a man spoils a thing and goes to a friend, ignoring his master, and the master calls him to account, this proverb applies.

41. Nkita kbọ ẹwu, siya : ivẹsileši nasuagĩ; m' inẹli jindò (O).

The dog calls to the goat and says, cooked food suits you, yet you eat raw yams.

Advice from a wise servant to a foolish one; please your master.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

42. Qbq ainyi dil' ɛ̃we n' adaka ; onye nɛ̃gulũfa (A).
Our companions are monkeys and baboons ; who cooks for them ?

Ulu ainyi dil' qzò ; anaralačazi olome (A).

Qbq ainyi dil' qzò ; adalačazi oluma (O).

Our companions are chimpanzees, they don't suck limes.

(?) Teach your grandmother to suck eggs.

43. Akukwq nnewu talu, ka ñweya natã (O).

The leaf that big goat has eaten its kids eat.

Like father like son.

44. Ñwannaya nabw' ufie, nàbwa agidi ɓwom (A).

The child for whom the father dances Ufie dances Agidi.

Like father like son.

45. Ẽziñkpolo nadà ɛ̃ziñkpolo (O).

Good seed fall good seed.

Good parents produce good children.

46. Obá bu aya (O).

Numerous family means trouble (war).

47. Ñwanne bu qgo (O).

Brothers mean fighting—

(a) A brother will revenge a brother.

(b) There's quarrelling in a big family.

48. Ainy' ɛ̃lur' íkè ili owá iru nabq.

We can't eat the world on two sides.

You can't have many children and much money.

49. Akú ñwa b' ũzq, ɛ̃go ikp' azí (O).

Wealth of children comes first, money second.

50. Ẽlibɛ̃ nni adakwal' uma (O).

When they eat food, they don't weep for the knife.

A man forgets the trouble of earning the bride price when his children are born.

51. Olili nni adadi k' ɔloliya (O).

Eating food is not like working for it.

Paying the bride price is not like having children.

52. Qɛwɛ nni, nɛwɛ nni ; ɔsu nni nabaɣ' uku (O).

Who has food has food. If he pounds it he breaks his waist
(i.e., back).

Of a man who pawns his children.

53. Akukwa di etɔ, ofɛli.

When there are three supports (for a pot), it is firm.

A man who has children has power.

54. Agwɔ si : n' ofu ofu mɛɭufa ; na asi na fabikola, ofu
mwade araga n' ɛzi ainyi (A).

The snake says : one by one does it ; if they say they live
together no one crosses the street.

Union is strength.

55. Igwɛ bu ike (O).

Union is strength.

56. Awɔ si na onye nyalo ɔko bul' qgali (A).

The frog says who warms himself becomes strong.

Union is strength (?)

57. Ofu onye anarɛbi ɛyayaya n'ago (A).

One person can't make a noise in the farm.

Four hands are better than two.

58. Agamevu adɛmwa n'aɣu.

A thorny leaf is not good for a head pad.

A man will not let people kidnap his children in his
presence.

59. Imi n' ainya b' oiyi.

Nose and eyes are friends.

Brothers must help each other.

60. Ololɛngodo sɛle ndi nɛwɛɭ' isi jɛb' qgobi (A).

Grasshopper says that those who have heads can go and fight
with the quarterstaff.

A poor man can't do much.

61. Ofu onye iyèle ɔdudu atabueya.

If one man walks alone, a fly bites and kills him.

A lonely man suffers.

Ofu ife adaraii (A).

One thing does not walk alone.

Ofu onye adaii (O).

One man does not walk alone.

62. Anandri si ife nniye ji aka em' ɔgili, k' ɔgili nali qfe (O).

The ant says what his mother takes in her hand to make ogili, ogili eats, as soup.

This may be said by children of parents who have become poor.

63. Qbuluna qro nato anwulu, k' osi ainya ɔko, mw'qkagwo idingiga (A).

If the rump takes soot to warm itself, 'twill be bigger than a round basket with a cover.

If a father loses many children and then seven live, he will say this to a stranger to show how many he has had.

64. Mbè sele : onye afofo k' aru nwoloya si b' uke, ya nene atani ofoloya ɔko (A).

The tortoise says : he who sees how sick he is and says it is bad luck, should look at the rat who makes fire for him.

A woman whose children die can say this to a childless woman.

PARENTAL ADVICE.

65. Qbulu mbwè Ikengu bu afia, mw' ikudo aɔ ɔfè n'uzo (A).

It is when Ikengu market is big that you meet a bad thing on the road.

If a father wants to prevent his son from going to a place.

66. Ókenye edeje ije ife (O).

An old man does not go a shameful journey.

67. Abum abia ; nkpó áde n' abia, abi edeñw' ísí (O).

I am a long drum ; if the wedge is not there the drum has no head.

That is a father must help his child if the child is to prosper.

68. Ísí sì qnụ : ebukweyi ; olu ka ebuel' qnụ, ebukod' ísí ezibo (A).

The head says to the mouth they are cutting you off ; when they cut off the mouth they cut off the head too.

69. Qkba qkoko zqlq ñwaiya, anarebwiya (A).

The foot of a fowl treads on its chicken but never kills it.

WORK AND IDLENESS.

70. Eka onye nabagare akụ, eka onafiyali qnụ (A).

Where one chews a palm nut round and round he twists his mouth round and round.

A man who knows how to do work must tell those who don't.

71. Oiyim, kañgwaikwoni, n'omaseli ntì, omaseli nyanwu nyanwu (O).

My friend, let me tell you, what's good for the jaw is good for chewing.

Friends must help each other.

72. Nwata yukw' uzọ k'ainya ra (A).

The child does not see the road that his eyes choose.

If a child attempts work beyond its powers.

73. Ozo gbūfulumu anara ejimba (A).

Ozo kpopuni ede ji ñpa (O).

A clever blacksmith doesn't use pincers.

A well trained man doesn't want help.

74. Elili edebenye ñweñwe n'aka (O).

The bush rope doesn't break in the hands of a small monkey.

Of a man who knows his work.

75. Íkè isu nni gu onye, onaču ewu (O).

If strength to pound food fails a man, he chases goats away.

76. Ñwata mwavul' ite, mwa ya mwabul' aju (A).
A child helps itself from the pot, but does not help itself to a head pad.
77. Onye qbo amwa n' q̄lu nágu agu (A).
A lazy man does not know that work comes to an end.
Urging a man to begin.
78. Uz̄q̄ ego adir̄q̄ nso.
The road to wealth is not near.
i.e., is a long one.
79. Onye ókwala q̄d̄q̄ce ainya.
A man with a cough does not stand sentry.
All work is hard for a lazy man.
80. Onye āj̄ql̄u naru q̄gò (A).
One who fears work chooses his hoe.
A bad workman complains of his tools.
81. Q̄lu bu ji adadi k' q̄luleya (O).
Planting yams is not like clearing the farm.
82. Anar̄q̄ ji ofumb̄q̄se ak̄būju akpati.
You cannot fill a box in one day.
Wealth means hard work.
83. Anwu k'ananalo q̄lu, q̄w̄q̄liye, anql̄u na ndo lie (O).
Sun when they go to work, when they take to eat they are in the shade.
Hard work is not the only pleasure.
84. Ēd̄q̄ji n̄cīci amátò oia (O).
They don't compare a rodent ulcer with the sickness.
Of a hard-working man.
85. Itutu kal' itutu, wolu nn̄q̄fi ak̄ba, sí k' òw̄ql̄u baliya ok̄mpu (A).
There is shouting and shouting ; if he makes a bag by skinning a big cow he says they must give him a big horn.
Of a man who makes a great deal of fuss over his work.

86. Efi sì : nya dēmwa ije, mw' adērōmwa ẹzu afia (O).

The cow says : he is good for walking but no good for trading in the market.

Of a workman compelled to do work he doesn't know.

87. Ogonog' ẹlil akọla aro nabọ, aiejidek' ịgwe', k aiejidek' ani (A).

A long rope collected for two years ; is it to tie heaven or earth ?

Endless labour is useless.

88. Ainya di ji nat' mpuma nkọ (A).

The eyes of the farmer sharpen the matchet.

(a) When the farmer's eye is on them the workers do not idle.

(b) If a farmer sees his farm, he begins to work even if he is disinclined to do so.

89. Qk̄bapalonto bu unọ nk̄ita (A).

The hearth is the house of the dog.

A man's work is his own and he does it.

90. Enwe si na onye nniya nwuru nat' akụ (A).

A monkey says he whose mother dies eats palm nuts.

The worst paid man wants to leave work first.

91. Agwọ bwa ogali alo ọgulugu (A).

When the snake goes it waits for its middle.

The tired man may leave his work.

92. Aku ągugo na nti ẹdẹzu ikè (O).

Till the nut is finished the jaw does not rest.

Work first then rest.

93. Dibia g' olu, onyelu akpa àfà (O).

If a doctor goes to work he hangs his divination bag.

The workman must be ready for his work.

APPEARANCES.

94. Onye yi akb̄bokb̄okw̄u malo eḅ qnafwiya ; ofu na (?) mwadu si n' akb̄bokb̄okw̄u amaka (O).

The man who wears the boot knows where it pinches ; another man says the boot is very fine.

A man who has trouble in his own house can say this to a stranger.

95. Nkita gbęlegbęle nękboli akw' ękoko (O).

The dog that walks slowly takes hens' eggs and eats them.

CONSOLATION.

96. Nwoke anareb ękwę maka naya n'ife nafęme (A).

A man does not weep because he and something have a quarrel.

97. ękoko gwal' udęne siya: di ndidi; nya bu ękoko; ęetakwęno n'ya namwę, ngi b' udęne abia nato guge guge (O).

The fowl says to the vulture: be patient; she is a fowl, only remember that she hatches chickens. You vulture come hopping, hopping.

To console for the loss of a child.

IMPRUDENCE.

98. Udęne si: obę nyę kwasiya milinke mwalia tata, eęi onye gęniye ęko na gę ji nyake aroya (O).

The vulture says: if he cries rain to-day, to-morrow who will give fire that he takes to warm his body.

Lack of foresight.

99. Nęwaii k' ękoko inyem się; inyęm ęzę węgogoam (O).

If I tell you that the fowl you gave me ran away you must give me another to please me.

100. Igu anaęę n' ętiti isę aiwutiya n' abuba ęti (O).

The louse that they look for in the middle of the head they catch in front of the ear.

Finding a lost object at home after searching all the town for it.

101. ębwę ęzalo pal' ękoko ęzalo na n' akbo ęzalo (A).

The hawk of Isalo catches a fowl of Isalo and goes to the cotton tree of Isalo.

102. Anamaęę nęwuru ęękulu nke nęwurugwolo, aiwuru (A).

One who wants to die goes to one who is dead and dies.

To a friend who begs of a poor man in misfortune.

103. Anarano ẹka wāba futa n' ẹke daba (A).

If he doesn't know that the market is "laid flat" (that is, open)
he can go to market and lie down flat.

To people who don't know what given work entails.

104. Anáranó asa ẓile asa wẹ n' akba (A).

One who does not hear seven takes seven to put in a bag.

A person who states what he is going to do without
knowing what's going to happen.

105. Onye anqrọ ẹka anẹmiye uzọ, anàkwa akẹkbe (A).

The man who was not there, when they put the door, takes his
left hand to push.

Of a man who decides a palaver without knowing the
facts.

106. Ony' Íbò sị n' qbulu n' agwāliya neḡu egede, mwa ya at'
uḡu n' ẹkẹ (O).

An Ibo says if they said the dance was Agidi he would order
a waist from the market.

Of a man that is unprepared for his work. Agidi is a dance
that involves a good deal of stooping.

PRUDENCE.

107. Igẹtukulu n̄wainyime n' uḡu, n' aḡu: kẹd' ife qgamu
(A).

You stoop to look at a pregnant woman's waist and ask what
she will bear.

Wait and see.

108. Ata onubu qnṽ ve inu (A).

If a man eats bitter leaf his mouth is bitter.

109. Adaṇaba qká,* alača oluma (O).

They don't roast corn and suck limes.

110. Akbokata onye qkokabwa, onye anakbọlo amálu (A).

Speak of a certain person too much and the one they speak of
knows it.

* The ordinary tone is ọka.

111. Ewu na n' obwọ anat' igu (O).
A goat in a boat does not eat palm leaf.
A sick person must diet himself.
112. Jili ẓfifie jid' egu oji, mwak' učiči abwa (A).
Ebul' uezọ ọu ewu oji n' onọ, mak' učiči abwa n' amafuziya (O).
Make haste and drive the black goat in, because the night is coming and one will not see it.
113. Ife mę ite, omę mili (A).
Ife mę ite, n' ya mę mili (O).
What happens to the pot happens to the water.
If a man kills a thief he kills himself too.
114. Ozù' nánọdò ẹnẹgwínì, ọtọbọlọ ; mwa mwadu amanọdò ẹnẹgwínì ; ọbwanaba (O).
The body stays while they are digging the grave and lies still ;
but a man does not stay while they are digging the grave,
he runs away.
Of a person who is ill treated.
115. Ẹbal' ọji, ọji akulu, inw' abalu mwade, ọbwalu (A).
If they quarrel with the kola tree the kola tree stands still ;
if they quarrel with a man he runs.
116. Ẹka onye nwele ainya, ẹka osi af' uezọ (A).
Where a man has eyes, he passes to look at the road.
A man goes to see if anything happens in his wife's part of the house or where his son lives.
117. Onye ọiyè siya : ẹjina okwà' lifẹ, ọkọ ọta ọko, otiwọnẹluye (A).
When a man's ẹi tells him : don't take okwa to eat ; if he buys a pot it breaks it for him.
118. Qt' ákọ ; enwege mbanaka, nke ọkọ n' ọnụ afuọuo ainya (A).
He chews nuts ; if he has none left in his hand the one in his mouth suffers much.
Be careful with a unique thing.

119. Qkùñši si naiya malu na fagaku nši, mwa ya ẹkolo akbanši bia (A).

If a witch doctor says he knows they are going to poison, he hangs his bag of medicine and comes.

120. Ase n' akbà akbà, ala n' ute; mw' ákb' gakbà, ala n' ana (A).

They say if they arrange they sleep on a mat, if they don't arrange they sleep on the ground.

121. Onye ajuju adẹfu uzọ (O).

One who asks can't miss the way.

122. Ila ola, iče úče.

When you sleep you take thought.

OBEDIENCE.

123. Nwa na ka ẹi nti qbqrnwa (O).

The child that shuts its ears is not a child.

124. Onye afia atol' ato uyọlo na nti ẹliye (A).

A man whom they send to market is advised till his ears are deaf.

125. Udẹne adaju okómwọ (O).

A vulture does not refuse to be sent by the Mwọ (presumably to eat corpses).

ADVICE (see also No. 2).

126. Àkpà aratọ ẹgẹde n' ọnụ (O).

Dumb man does not hold a drum in his mouth.

A man who has good advice will give it.

127. Ẹbozo bwankiti natọ ajọnụ (O).

If a cricket is silent, it's making a big hole.

Of an evil doer who makes no reply to the advice of his family.

128. Olọ onye zil' onwiya, onarakwa mware (A).

Ozi onye zili onwiye, adakwiya mwalo (O).

If a man sends himself on a message, he doesn't complain of not knowing.

A man who refuses advice says this.

129. Obuekezie, Ilo nwa, ekukwa n' ekb azu nqarevuzo (A).

Obuekezie, son of Ilo says : that last is not first.

If people refuse advice.

130. Apal' ozu nwa onye qzo, qdika apa uku nkò (A).

If they take the corpse of another man's child, it's like carrying a bundle of wood.

To a man who questions the need of precautions.

131. Ofonoli si nya kwè na unono vevigalo, n' akwã diya n ikè ; asi nya lil' amwosu (O).

Ofonoli says : that the bird that is flying across has eggs inside it ; they say he has eaten witch medicine.

(a) Of unasked advice of a friend against whom there is a plot.

(b) Son refusing the advice of his father.

SLANDER.

132. Ona : a anarebu ebwe (A).

Shouting " Ah ! " does not kill a hawk.

Bad names don't kill.

133. Ebubo k' oiny' uma (O).

Obo ka oinya mma (A).

Slander is worse than the wound of a knife.

134. Mbòbwá (ikbe) ka nsi èle (A).

Ntano ka nsi èle (O).

Backbiting is worse than poison.

135. Ekwonoba n' Qka sele siduinye onye nanqro, ka ikbe beboeya (A).

Ekwono, son of Oba of Oka says : if they give him one who is not there he can beat him in argument.

136. Nwannonono akwa nenu oji ; efio, nwodafi nwuru (O).

A small bird cries on the top of a tree ; the son of a big man dies at dawn.

" WISE MEN."

137. Ejeki si nelo ugu ego nabq nlo nabq ego qdo nanq (A).

Ejeke says: if they count six cowries in twenty places twice it is six cowries in forty places.

138. Okoye, Adenwuli, si na ife ji nniye n' af' Ibo bu na Ibo
ekwewo ife nniye ku, mwa nniye ekwewo if' Ibo ku
(O).

Okoye, son of Adenwuli, says : that what keeps his mother in
the Ibo market is that the Ibo don't agree to what his
mother says, and his mother doesn't agree to what the
Ibo say.

GRATITUDE.

139. Okoko anarečozo onye rułoya qdo n' odumili (A).
Okoko adazq onye kwoli qdo n' odumili (O).

The fowl does not forget the one who pulled out its tail in the
wet season.

140. Adakada seke ugu : inebodum ite, ebu ka inezim ezi (A).
The dung beetle says to the hill : are you helping me to lift the
pot or throwing me down ?

Adakada kpolo ugu, siya : qb' ibu kenakwum k' qbu
ainyekbeli (O).

The dung beetle calls to the hill, saying : do you help me with
my load or take it away from me ?

To a faithless friend.

141. Nwata toa nnaiya nenu, qgqoq aiyokb' oya ainya (A).

A child lifts the father up, and his cloth spoils his (the boy's)
eyes.

142. Alacaba mwainya, ece' onye bul' aku (A).

They lick up the palm oil, but forget the man who cut the nut.

If a stranger trains a boy, then the boy forgets him when he
grows up.

143. Ony' efio, seke nnaiya nay' ebuluya uzq mutanwa ;
nnaiya wesiya : nwam, onye mutadenegi ? (A).

A fool says to his father : he had a child before him ; the
father says to him : my son, who is your father ?

Of an ungrateful son who won't help his father.

144. Ony' efio amwa na nwanniye bu qbia (A).

A fool does not know that his brother is a stranger.

Of a friend who entertains another who is badly treated.

145. Nwangwale ama nniye (O).

A little lizard does not know its mother.

EXAGGERATION.

146. *Yi ẹluo agó bu nnè ; mwa na okwẹre ńgupu bu asi (A).*
That a yam grows big is true, but that it can't be dug out is a lie.
147. *Ababum enyi bu ẹzioku ; mwa n' obutalia n' ụzọ nkwasị (O).*
That I have killed an elephant is true, but that I carried it on to the road is a lie.
148. *Onye si : na mili ẹzoká kwulu ẹziokù ; mwa na obolu ozu n' ani bókwasị (O).*
He who says that too much rain falls tells the truth, but that rain dug up a dead body is a lie.

GETTING ONE'S DESERTS.

149. *Agulu męle akbàná ọkoko, sie n' imi, si : ka xúne xúne di ẹle, xùnè xùnè gadisidaga (A).*
A bush cat takes fowl dropping and says: if a worthless thing is like that, what will a good thing be.
Ñsilẹko męl' akpana' ọkoko siye n' imi, de n' ile, si : inelíne diọ, inelíne okẹzi ya gadi (O).
150. *Onye ọkba ńpilisi nęgu nag' ọgo ; ase : ẹkwulu ifẹ onabwęgu (A).*
A half footed man dances and fights and they say : see how he dances.
Unrecognized merit.
151. *Efi si niyal' ọgo ogò ifeva gačudide ọtòt' etọ, n' ọbụ niya bu anụnọ (O).*
The cow says she has reached an age when they can run after her for three mornings because she is a domestic animal.
A prophet has no honour.
152. *Okwala abatobi, ẹfio nfińfio, oču ola (A).*
A neighbour's cough if it does not attack one, keeps away sleep.
Of trouble for the benefit of another.
153. *Ọtegáka azu nya bal' anwu, k' ogab' oji, mw' obwanorọ (O).*
For the long time that their backs have been hot in the sun, they should be black, but are not.
Of unrecognized merit in servants.

154. Dìntá aǵakutege, qǵakulu ẹbweya, naba (A).

If a hunter meets nothing he takes his gun and goes home.

Fruitless trouble.

155. Efi si naiya mòmwá sobe dińwẹniya; qboló nya dà n' ana, aiyamavubiye, amavube (A).

The cow says : that she follows her master on purpose ; if he falls down they won't pick him up or carry him.

Unappreciated work.

156. Okute neti' akụ nagoiya qno, mw' qno na tata adagoiya (O).

The stone that breaks the palm nuts counts them with his mouth, but the mouth that chews them does not count them.

FALSE EXCUSES.

157. Onyala buǵile umwaya, ose na umwaya bu ẹboa (A).

A madman breaks his knife and says that now he has got two.

If a man spoils anything, his explanations are usually false.

158. Ẹgù ogbqma nǎtolo efi, ućići qkwqliya n' azu (O).

The cow fears the witch, but at night he rides on her back.

DELAYS.

159. Ije di mbu ádeǵi ogo (O).

Going in a hurry does not eat (*i.e.*, prevent) fighting.

If you stop a person in a hurry.

160. Asi k' ẹwẹl' ućići oku onye qǵo maka ẹi ofo (O).

People say take the night for a murderer palaver, because day comes.

Hang him at once.

161. Abwẹsi siǵli ńwunniye : nyẹsi ite qsisq, mwaka na ẹi ẹmekwẹ jiri, Ẹbẹfa ẹbuqǵo (A).

The black ant said to his wife, cook quickly for fear night comes, when our people commit murder.

CARRYING OUT ONE'S PLANS.

162. Qkba ńko anarakba abwala, qkba abwala, isi abaiya oifia (A).

A man who collects wood does not gather abwala, *i.e.*, hairy seed. If he collects abwala his head goes inside the bush.

He hides himself.

163. Onye Mwolo sęle n' ęka mąke ęimbo, ek' anabul' uma (A).

A Mwolo man says that the calabash is sucked where the knife cuts.

This refers to the native method of bleeding, and is used of a person who gets what he wants without trouble.

164. Abu mbudo, ukwę adadi ęlę ękukwe (O).

I sing a song, the chorus is not difficult.

165. Akbata nko ęji eęi udęne ; ewęęisie akbąnakuku.

Wood is collected to cook a vulture, they take it to cook a green pigeon. .

166. Oęi ngę anaralaca nku akiya (A).

He may try but he can't lick his elbow.

167. Ania nńwite, obu oinya ęko.

Neglect a small pot and it puts the fire out.

(a) a stitch in time saves nine.

(b) a man can sometimes do more than people expect of him.

168. Adęę mbwada nakpa n' oifia.

They don't sell the duiker walking in the bush.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

169. Atolo si, na fad' ebę mulu nwa ; qęę ganagąną bul' ofu (A).

The sheep says they two get the child ; but the shaking sickness is what takes it.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

170. Ęzi nę n' iduma, m' qpoęaro ; qnaba, si nya pota, ji aguliya (O).

A pig in a trap can't get out, but it says that when it comes out its yams will be finished.

If a man in trouble talks of his plans.

"DO IN ROME AS ROME DOES."

171. Nko di bęmbą negęle nńbą ite (A).

Wood in the town cooks the pot in the town.

172. Ony' qfo araṭoṭa qkokq n' onq (O).
A new man does not pick up a fowl in the house.
173. Ony' qfo anarṣkwe eggu (A).
Ony' qfo eḍekwe abò (O)
A new man does not sing a song.

EXAMPLE AND REPUTATION.

174. Onye sobe ori, ozúbè ori (O).
Who follows a thief learns to steal.
175. Onye zul' qgboma n' òtu efi, qčq ga gĩ (O).
Who meets a witch where the cows meet, what are they looking for there?
If a thief says he has seen thieves at night.
176. Eñwe fu ka ibeya namwa, qmwaba.
A monkey sees its fellow jump and jumps too.
177. Ewu n' qbwiya nāye atigu (O).
The goat and its companions eat palm leaves.
178. Ofu ñkpolaka lota mwanu ozu qra nine (A).
One finger dipped in oil reaches everyone.
179. Gi bu nwannono, ifebenq, gėvu akb bal' ęso (A).
You, bird, fly and perch. You will fly and perch on the bird lime.
To a boy who begins to steal.
180. Oke nabwa mbalogwe, amwara n' akbo obiye di n' ani (A).
A rat runs on the frame of a house and does not know that its chest is on the ground.
That is, that it may fall. A thief goes to steal a goat and is not caught, but people know what he is.

CONTENTMENT.

181. Ozu adañwuru, nečqlo ulq (O).
A corpse doesn't die and remember rotting.
A man who has had many palavers and says I don't care.

182. Uḡene sḡle ñwunneya nime; qđimwa; obulu mw' onwuru, vḡlie ñwa; mw' qbulu n' omw' qđere, vḡkulu (A).

A vulture tells his wife that she will have a child, all right : If she has a dead child they eat it but if it's alive they carry it.

183. Nḡwḡle si nḡnu dà n' ani, to ainya mwadu, ḡfqrḡ, osi : k' ya ja onwiya mwa mad' aḡaziya (O).

A lizard falls down from above, looks for a man and sees none ; he says he will praise himself if no one else praises him.

184. Ẹlibe ofibo, eḡḡz' obul' akṹ (O).

When they eat palm oil they forget who cut the palm nut.

IGNORANCE.

185. Mwale nḡv' uzḡ na onareḡbe azṹ (A).

Mwazedim nḡbu uzḡ nḡd' ikbazu (O).

Regret is in front and not behind.

I don't know is the beginning and not the end.

186. Obodi j' ísì eti mwḡ, mw' amarḡ (O).

Ignoramus knocked his head against the Mwḡ and did not know.

187. Obodi amwara naiya na mwḡ nḡli eli n' ḡko (A).

Ignoramus didn't know that he and Mwḡ ate from one pot.

If a man puts on a mask to flog his people, and they complain to him on his return not knowing that he was the master.

PROMISES AND GIFTS.

188. Emḡsie ka nzeḡi, náḡḡ níti ḡḡḡ (A).

Emḡsia ka nḡwaii náḡḡ níti ḡḡḡ (O).

When I finish let me tell you, that scratches the ear.

Of an unfulfilled promise.

189. Okḡkbolo k' agwalu k' ḡkenya ñwunye ; osi k' qbulu ta, bul' eḡi (O).

A bachelor whom they tell that they are giving him a wife says let it be to-day or to-morrow.

For a delayed gift.

190. Ony' isi k' ebunyelu nni, qledainyaka, tiny' aka n' ofe,
tię nkpu, si : nni lulu, nabw' ony' isi, dinka ndi ful'
uzo elibu' onweva na nni (O).

A blind man to whom they give food takes his hand and rubs it and puts his hand in the soup and shouts and says : food comes to the blind man. Those who see the road have killed themselves with eating food.

Non-appreciation of a gift.

191. Obosi apu oruku, mw' oruku ato Obosi n' ainya (O).

Obosi can't get a shilling, but a shilling isn't much in his eyes (when he gets it).

To a beggar who complains of a gift.

192. Ełełełu nwa okoko, k' atoba ainya utoya (A).

Chickens are not sold for people to watch their growth (when they have sold them).

You don't expect presents to be returned.

193. Eñwe si odiyanammwa nya bulu omugwo* jębe okb alili (A).

A monkey says it is well that I go out as soon as I have borne a child to collect food.

Of a man who is working on his farm before the usual time to one who asks why he is working.

RUNNING RISKS.

194. Ejiri ife anabwa na nti abwa n' ainya ; abwaiya n' ainya, ainy' akboro.

They never take what they scratch the ear with to scrape the eye, if they scrape the eyes the eyes are spoilt.

Don't play with a dangerous thing.

195. Anaratunye akibi n' ukwu (A).

They don't show the size of elephantiasis by the legs.

When a child is playing with a dangerous thing.

EXTRAVAGANCE.

196. Nwata nwe oru ji ; osi na nya n' oru obosi gali (O).

A small boy has twenty yams and says he will eat for twenty days.

A boy who has had no trouble proposes to spend his money on title.

* Omugwo probably means discharge, lochia.

197. *Ẹjir' iwe ẹji ọlu ji, ẹwẹlẹliya (A).*

They are not angry at planting yams and eating them.

PRETENCE OF RICHES.

198. *Ẹwofì si Ẹjiji : inḡbẹ nanni ; munai inwẹlu (O).*

A yaws child says to the fly : you sit on my food ; are we sharing it.

Of a poor man who pretends to be rich.

199. *Onye obiam liju afọ, ọsi nya asaka nnaiya (A).*

A poor man fills his belly and says he is as rich as his father.

A poor man who pretends to be rich.

200. *Onye nẹlurọ k' ẹze adási buenye k' ebul' ẹze (O).*

One who is not as great as a king does not say kill him as they kill a king.

Those who want to imitate rich people.

MURDER WILL OUT.

201. *Onye ekbọlu nkpinwọ, očil' uče n' aka (O).*

One who has committed a crime has always care in his hand.

If a man has committed a murder his action is said to be Nkpimwo ; he is always anxious.

202. *Anam abwal' oku, ji učiči weni nniye tečiye, mak' oku ẹnuliye ẹifo ndi nwe nwa ju ase nwafa (O).*

I run from palaver and choose the night to bury my mother and rub her grave, because palaver troubles him (me) ; at dawn those who have a child ask for their child.

A man who runs from palaver will be caught.

203. *Ani tu ẹlẹmbala, aput' ẹnu (O).*

The earth uncovers a sherd and it comes out.

Lying will be discovered.

204. *Qsoso nẹsu ẹwu, mw' aji ẹkwẹrama (A).*

The goat sweats but the hair covers it.

Murder will be discovered.

STRENGTH.

205. *Akpili adag' ọkpà (O).*

A cock's throat is not exhausted.

206. Ojẹbe tata, okwudo onye nya (A).

He goes to-day and catches a man of yesterday.

207. Onye abwara ñbwá, bú ndò, qnoba ogo, bu qñwu ? (A).

He who does not go to wrestle which is life, would he go to fight which is death ?

A man who can't do small things can't do big things.

MISFORTUNE.

208. Onye ivię nàdàkò ndákò ndàkò, butul' akụ, qdà kulu na mpoto ẹde (A).

An unlucky man falls and falls and falls ; when he cuts a palm nut he falls and lands on a koko yam leaf.

209. Ebunu si : na mbwè ffè jì mębeye bu mbwè ya tọlofa afia izizi ; fazotaleya ebwagada mpu ; ya tọfa ọzọ nkeboa, azutalofaya amuibi (A).

The ram says : his first misfortune was when he told them to go to the market and they brought him a crooked horn ; he sent them a second time and they brought him elephantiasis.

210. Óru afulu ka ẹjì akakbolo ogo ẹni ibeya ; ọsí n' obọsi ñkeya qbul' ujọm (A).

A slave sees them take an old hoe to bury one of his fellows ; he says that on his day they will take a new one.

People who laugh at misfortune.

211. Ẹze no n' ibeya ñwuru, qkbọ n' ubu.

If a chief hears that his fellow is dead he shrugs his shoulders.

212. Onye si n' unkpumma ol' oku, asẹr' asi ; onye si n' obwa nkiti asẹr' asi.

He who says that a stone talks is not a liar ; he who says it does not talk is also not a liar.

When an accident is prevented.

QUARRELS.

213. Ọlubulu nẹli oñwiya (O).

Olobulu (? lizard) eats himself.

Warning one friend against another.

214. Ètũfurqm otanwata sqliye čqba (A).

I never lost a boy's bow and followed him to find it.

If a boy accuses a man of stealing his property.

215. Nwofi si n' ikbe amarq nniye, m' qmarq nniya ; na nniya
akqgu nni k' oge ju afq, nniye jibepu nkbilikbi ji,
sikoli eči, mak' ago bia (O).

A boy with yaws says it is not the fault of his mother nor
his father ; his father gives him food enough to fill his
belly and his mother cuts half a yam to keep for his food
to-morrow because hunger comes.

If two brothers have a quarrel, the arbitrators can say this,
meaning ; don't go into details.

216. Anę ji qnu ofu onye èkè óku.

Adana qnu ofu onye ara òlǔ.

Don't hear one man's mouth to settle the palaver.

Hear both sides.

217. Nkita na nwanniye lqvolq ; qdika qz' adęrqfa n' qno
(A).

If a dog and his brother play, it is as though there were no
teeth in their mouths.

If relatives have a quarrel.

218. Dibia bwafie, osi owęlę ná (A).

If a doctor is mistaken he leaves by the back of the house.

If friends have a quarrel the innocent one can say this.

219. Onye oku enw' oiyi (O).

Quarrelsome has no friend.

220. Ngwęle si nwanniye ka fawęle isibalia, na ife qnu kwulu
qnaǰoka (A).

The house lizard says to his brother let us talk by head shaking
because what the mouth says is always bad.

Let us give up quarrelling.

221. Qkba but' nši qęq obilulo (A).

The feet that carry dung find grass.

If two people quarrel and one asks for the other for help in
trouble.

222. Anarẹmẹrẹge azụ, di na ịwunye abulu ịwanne (A).
It does not take long, husband and wife are brother and sister.
Husband and wife soon settle a quarrel.
223. Diai, ainyi gakwọ aka geli ẹnwe, agel' isi ẹnwe biakwọno aka (O).
Friends, shall we wash our hands before eating monkey, or shall we eat monkey's head and just wash our hands?
Is the settlement of the quarrel to be final?
224. Íkẹ gu oke ẹfi, ogqorqmpu ye ainya (A).
If an old bullock is tired it bends its horn and closes its eyes.

WRONGDOING.

225. Ečetẹlẹ nǎi alo, ọta (A).
If they remind the bush rat of biting, it bites.
226. Ite ware, ite di n' ẹké (A).
A pot breaks and there is a pot in the market.
A prisoner must be punished but the damage can be repaired.
227. Agedolum ana, uyolo ísì akụ n' ǎka; onye mẹbie ani, ńkpolakụ adábweya (A).
He keeps the law and catches a head of palm nuts in his hand; if a man breaks the law one nut falls and kills him.
228. Ẹmẹsia ịà' ọnụ kulu nǎọ ẹku ọmwa (A).
After a man has spoken ill he speaks well.
A wrongdoer begs for mercy at last.
229. Agadinwaiyi dà ndada nabọ, agọa ife ọbu n' ọkba ọnụ.
If an old woman falls twice, they count what she has in her basket.
230. Oinya ná, apoya adanà (O).
The wound disappears but its scar does not.
Punishment does not undo a murder.
231. Qboro ẹkpẹ ńwa j'ite wa, k' ẹji ajuya (O).
It is not when a child breaks a pot that they ask questions.
Of a first offence.

232. Akukwò ogède nanwoli n' òtòtó, qmago k' anasi sisi (O).
The banana leaf is glad in the morning, but does not know
what the evening will be like.
233. Ètiwa ite, bakuta iyi azu (O).
The pot is broken and one turns one's back to the waterside.
234. Onye efio bu anu, obu ofeke yali (A).
A fool kills an animal ; he is a fool who wonders.

SNEEZING.

235. Nkpom qnu k' anakp arò edebu arò (O).
Calling me bad names, as they call the year, doesn't kill the
year.
236. Qnabo akà anagaḽ ụzò, abði ikpèl'oifia (O).
If they give a date for clearing the road they only brush the
side of the bush.
237. Azo aká ademwa ñkwokwoba (O).
The back of the hand is not good for the inside of the fist.
Calling for an ill purpose can't affect me.
[A sneeze is supposed to be an answer.]
238. Ozi anarèbu okò (A).
Ozi adèbu okò (O).
A message does not kill the messenger.
239. Èkulèku anarèbu dibia (A).
Calling does not kill the doctor.
240. Ogugu yèzè, mbwòlògu èsèlue ísíye (A).
Onunu jìe ibo, nkpòlògugu èsèl' ísíye (O).
A hole falls in, the roots move their heads out of the way.
241. Ainya adafu ñti (O).
The eyes don't see the ears.
242. Akà nagèbu ñgu ; ísí anawa ainyike (O).
They fix a day to cut ngu ; the axe's head aches.

243. Uẓẹle bu ẹze (O).

Sneezing is king.

Everyone salutes the sneezer and he salutes everyone.

244. Uẏẹle bu ẹze (O).

Yawning is king.

Everyone salutes him and he salutes everyone.

PATIENCE.

245. Itẹ̀nkba' bid' aka n' obu, n' akọ ẓaiča (A).

The oil pot puts its hand on its heart, and the palm nut gets ripe.

246. Onye n' adẹr' uẹu adalotā ẓi (O).

A man who is not persevering does not eat yams.

A man who is well off is not a thief.

247. Nwaiyọ bu iẓe (A).

Slow is the journey.

Slow and sure.

248. Onye ʼavale ọgalainya, ọtag' ose, ọta ọẓi (A).

One who is near a rich man, if he doesn't chew pepper will chew kola.

249. Onye nača ọba azı, adabu obwenye (O).

He who washes the king's back can't be poor.

A master will treat a servant well if he is patient.

250. Afiamala se ńwiya : dikwa ndidi ; n' ifè n' aro ọko k' ąjul' ọyi (A).

The louse says to its child : be patient, what is hot gets cold.

MARRIAGE.

251. Ite ware, ite di n' Ẽke (A).

If a pot is broken there is a pot in the Eke market.

A man says this to a quarrelsome wife.

There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it.

252. Onye Abwene si: ñwainye tẹkwesi ofe, obwonariya, qno avuliyambẹku (A).

A man of Abweni says: if a woman cooks soup and it boils before she is ready she can take her mouth and blow it.

What a husband says to a quarrelsome wife.

253. Ñwa qmugwo sili na mbwè ċiye ji mębiya ifè, bu mbwè ẹjikute mili izizi aganaiya nyenye n' ísí gafue n' ana (A).

A small baby said when its Ċi did him wrong was when they brought water first to give him, and pass round his head and pour on the ground.

That is if a man's wife and children die.

254. Ak áfu ísí, m' iya laruna ola (A).

Ak' áf' ísí, m' ọ́laru (O).

If the hand does not see the head it can't sleep.

A wife waits on her husband's pleasure.

255. Uma ẹku ademe ẹbele, ji (O).

A cooking knife has no pity on the yam.

A woman tries to get all she can from a man.

256. Fa ji qkà lat' qkoko (O).

They take corn to catch a fowl.

They pay money for a wife.

257. If' qsisọ bu ọ́gù.

Love of a person is medicine.

A man has one favourite wife and beats the others.

258. Ẹbẹle akpọkpọ ẹdeme qñwene (O).

Pity for the skin does not touch the heart of the leather worker.

A bad wife is not sorry for her husband.

259. Qsq nabor' qsq, okboro bwakqkud' aka n' ala (O).

Running is not running, if a woman runs with her hands holding her breasts.

If a man marries with borrowed money.

260. Kulu mili izizi, kute alogolo (A).

Ẹkue na mili izizi, ekut' alolo (O).

If you take the first water you take dirt.

To encourage a man to marry again if his first wife dies or is a bad one.

261. Okporo bu ụnọ (A).

Woman is the house.

You can't have a real home without a woman.

262. Anaresi ẹuo ite wẹle lẹbe n' afia (A).

Fadamaču ite, ẹwẹliya gẹle n' afia (O).

You don't use a pot and take it to sell in the market.

To a wife who wants to leave her husband.

263. Ifitewu anarẹli ńkpóga (A).

A she-goat does not eat when she is dragged away.

Of a woman who leaves her first husband and is worse off than before.

264. Akba qfó an' ainya n' obi.

A new bag is seen on the chest.

A new wife can do as she pleases.

265. Enyi bu uku ńko, ẹka onye idolo, onye qtóraiya (A).

A friend is a lump of firewood ; when he is heavy one throws him down.

When a husband turns out a bad wife.

266. Ojẹlu be qgalainya, qtage ose, qta qji (A).

If one goes to the house of a rich man if one does not chew pepper one chews kola.

267. Ojẹ b' okenye, ẹgu imi, qgwe qno (O).

If one goes to a big man, if one does not shake one's nose one moves one's mouth.

One gets either snuff or kola, said of a woman who gets a bad but rich husband.

268. Ani ńwoke adẹro, ńwainye nẹli nru (A).

” ” ” ” neli nru anu (O).

In the land of no man woman eats the gift of honour.

Of a woman who neglects her husband.

269. Dibia liju' afọ, qpala akbaya dobuge azu (A).

The doctor fills his belly and carries his bag behind him.

Dibia liju' afọ, agota ńkpologu (O).

The doctor fills his belly and pulls out splinters.

Of a woman with an old husband who wants to leave him and go to a man with money.

270. N̄wa ajuju anarefu ezi.

A child asks and does not miss the road.

Make enquiries about a woman that you want to marry.

271. Anaret' uče k' afufu si ebu, iwele liju afu.

Don't think that trouble comes and kills, and you get food to fill your belly.

272. Edeṭu uke eliḡu afu (O).

You must not think of ill fortune when you want to fill your belly.

For a widow who won't be married.

273. Akbata n̄ko; onwug' oko; apagareya n' oifia, ek' akbataleya (A).

They collect firewood and it does not light; they take it back to the bush where they collected it.

Of a bad wife.

274. Nwoke eba oku, qnoba nwainye; mwa oku govaya ago, qnoba eboa (A).

If a man wants palaver he marries a wife; if palaver is hungry for him he marries two.

PROMISING INFORMATION.

275. N̄wannem, agwagomi, kaḡwaii abor' ofu (A).

My brother, I have told you and let me tell you are not the same thing.

276. Oiyim, kaḡwaii n' qsq diče, ganaganà diče (O).

My friend, I tell you running and shaking yourself are different.

277. Ife di be n̄wa na nwamwe (O).

What is in the house of the child belongs to the child.

INNOCENCE.

278. Onye nemerq ife iyi adafo akbala egu (O).

Who has not sworn does not fear thunder.

279. Onye nelir' ejuna, onarekpofu nkilikoya (A).

Onye nelir' ejuna adainya igogolie (O).

He who has not eaten snail does not carry its shell.

280. Enyi mę ife, ụna ẹbu enyi ; mw' enyi ẹmeg' ife, ńdò abulu ńkeya.

An elephant does something and a knife kills him ; an elephant does nothing ; his life is his own.

CHIEFTAINSHIP.

281. Obu anarabwa aka (A).

The obu (men's house) has not empty hands.

There is a chief to every town.

282. Abum ísí aka ; ísí aka áde n' aka, aka abwa ivilívi (O).

I am the thumb ; if there is no thumb, the hand turns round.

If there is no chief the country suffers.

283. Obẹlani, mbẹku ẹil' ọzọ (O).

In a small country the tortoise makes ọzọ title.

FRIENDSHIP.

284. Oiyi bu oiyi ńwọbala na nkita (O).

Friends are friends, like cat and dog.

285. Aiyaram ẹkwẹle na muku ńwa n' okbà, wẹzaba ẹnwẹrẹ ńwa (A).

I don't agree to carry my child on my foot. I answer there is no child.

When someone asks a friend to do work for him.

286. Abialum aza onọ bial' ọčoọ (A).

Abalum za onọ bu ọčoọ (O).

I came to sweep the house is a chuck out.

You don't order a friend about in his house.

287. Ọsísí ńwẹl' afa, k' oiyi nedudaba oiyi (O).

A tree gets a name ; a friend takes his friend to it.

A friend helps a friend.

288. Qbu nak' ākà nẹgẹbu, Abwaja ná ; mwa ák' ākà, ebu Abwaja (O).

If they give notice when they are going to kill, the Abwaja people run away ; if they don't give notice, they kill the Abwaja people.

Said by a friend who comes to see another without notice.

289. Nne na ñwaiya anarama ọko ẹl' ife (A).

Mother and child don't light a lamp to eat.

Ñwanne na ñwanne adamu ukpe ẹli nni (O).

Brother and sister don't light a lamp to eat.

Friends don't fear each other.

290. Ifuainya mbwada kad' orue (O).

Seeing duiker pleases the hunter.

It's better to see and not kill, than not see at all.

When friends meet after a long absence, and the host has no food.

PRIDE.

291. Ikbakba si na ka mwa ọkoko gasqnariya, na bwa nkp
ogili n' ọfe.

The ikbakba* says : it's better that the fowl should be sweeter than he, and melt in the soup like ogili.

292. Ẹzi si na ẹlugo kaya gẹmẹbi ǎkwa, mwa na nẹa ñwẹl' ikẹ
isučapia.

Blood says : I am able to spoil cloth, but soap can wash away.

293. Mwāun fūta, obodi abwal' ọsq.

Masks come out and fools run away.

When there is work to do, a lazy boaster runs.

294. Ana ñwoke nadęrq ñwainye nere ñku (A).

Ani mwadu nadęrq, mbẹku ẹil' ọzọ (O).

Land of no man ; a woman makes palm wine.

Land of no man ; tortoise takes title.

Of a boasting stranger.

295. Ñwannonno si n' ana bẹ na mpú ; eka ọnọkwa, k' ọnọq
(A).

A small bird flies up from the ground and perches on an ant heap, where it stops there let it remain.

Of a boaster who has made some titles.

* A small bird.

296. Amačam if' owa, kqlo ji n' obo qkba, kwę n' afonu (A)
Who knows the things of this world, plants yams under his feet, and ties them to his beard.
297. Nwannonono lijuo afq, osi čiye kuliye (A).
If a small bird fills its belly it tells its či to carry it.
Of a boaster.
298. Áfu oruku afo afunainya (A).
One who can't get a shilling is not of much account.
A big man speaking of a boaster.

HOME.

299. Bonye bu bonye (O).
My house is my house.
There's no place like home.
300. Aru nnegu čębqlu n'waiya.
The body of the she-goat guards its child.
If a man has many children, some go abroad ; a married girl may say she wants to go home, for her own country is best.
301. Ifę nwa kaso nne kali nna.
A child pleases the mother more than the father.
302. Qsq ndò-anaragu ikè.
Running for life does not exhaust your strength.
A man never tires of trying to save his child.

INDECISION.

303. Qdum eđębu ugu anu (O).
A lion never kills half an animal.
304. Anaręji uče nabq alo ji.
One does not think twice about planting yams.
If a man is hesitating about marrying.
305. Anarači qkba nabq ęne ogwe.
No one takes two legs to step over an obstacle.
One thing at a time.

306. Uče nabq anarekwe onye oiya ẹli ife odogeli.
Two ideas don't allow the sick man to eat the things that he keeps (?)
307. Uče nabq ẹdekwe okumu ẹli jibwiya.
Two ideas don't allow the sick man to eat the yams from his farm.

FORBIDDEN FOODS.

308. Okpanām sql' ẹbunu li atulu.
Okpanam forbids rams, but eats sheep.
309. Ẹnugu ẹmekoeme oli anu sql' ẹiwe.
Hill country, famous land, eats meat (of man) but forbids monkey.

GREED.

310. Ili obele ilie nnẹku (A).
Olie nkentà olie nkuku (O).
He eats the small one's, does he eat the big one's?
That is, the elder brother who takes his own share and wants to take his brothers' shares.

IMPORTUNITY.

311. Ukúvù jo ifè, qnụ anareliya (A).
Ukúvù ju ifè na qnụ adeliye (O).
If the shoulder refuses a thing, the mouth does not eat it.
When a man begs a second time.
312. Qsu akụ, oji qkoko ẹzul' ikè (A).
When one pounds palm nuts he drives fowls away for a change.
A man always begging for favours.
313. Nwa ẹgu bua ikpele n' ani qnololo nneya ala (A).
A kid puts its knees on the ground to suck its mother's milk.
A man who knows how to beg gets what he wants.

DEATH.

314. Dibia nagwọ otolo, odebel' afwiya n' osọ (O).
A doctor who cures otolo keeps his stomach in another place.
315. Qñwu anarakba óke (A).
Death cannot make a boundary.
316. Qñwu adado ẹbwẹ (O).
Death does not fire a gun.
317. Qñwu ato ẹgù (O).
Death has no fear.
318. Qñwu ẹbu qgo abia (O).
Death does not fight when he comes.
319. Azi naiwuli n'òtòtò, onye gbalo anasi afa (O).
A child is glad in the morning, can he divine for night.
A man does not know when he will die.
320. Ačala ñwuru, ačala puchi.
Elephant grass dies ; elephant grass grows up.
People killed in war.

LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE.

321. Atolo si naya amwara bwal' qsq mwa ẹbuteluye, nya awoba awoba (A).
A sheep says she doesn't know how to run ; when they carry her she jumps and jumps.
A quiet man when roused may be dangerous.
322. Ẹtikọ nyaka ẹzi enya ẹk' aro (O).
Constant flogging helps to give strength.
A poor man may become dangerous.
323. Qnụ onye alo, k'ânano ofu ife ẹji akpoya (O).
From the mouth of an evil doer, let them hear one thing to take him to prison with.
You must hear a prisoner.

324. Ākwà n̄zurq uku, anar̄ḡetu ñwa (A).

Ākwà elurq n' uku, odan̄etu ñwa (O).

If the cloth does not suffice for the father's waist, it doesn't knock the child down.

Wait for the trial of an accused person.

DEBT.

325. Ife onye ĵi n' aka k' q̄ĵi anu qgo (O).

What is in a man's hand let him take it to fight.

A man pays with anything that he can.

326. Ĕzil' ego ku onye uḡwq; onye uḡwq na, onye ĵi uḡwq
ejilili kwq uḡwq (O).

Money is borrowed to pay a debt; the creditor goes, but the debtor still owes the money.

CHILDREN SUFFERING FOR PARENTS.

327. Qkwá n'ísí, okubu q̄č̄ĕlo (A).

If it misses the head the shoulder waits.

328. Qñwu bulu nnoke, 'anar̄kwe unwaya as' ainya (A).

Death kills a big rat, and does not let the children open their eyes.

329. Amuta ñwa n' abqrq ñwa, q̄ĵiliye bo ife naiya n̄m̄et' alo
(A).

When a man gets a child which is not a child (that is not clever) they take it to pay back the father's misdeeds.

330. Ñwa q̄riginne, bq̄ba ife q̄m̄ġlu nnaiya; ife q̄m̄ġlu nnaiya
q̄meye (A).

If a child is not big they take him for what his father did; what his father did is done to him.

IF A WEAK MAN TRIES TO EXERT AUTHORITY.

331. Q̄dik̄d̄i bo a mba; q̄dik̄d̄i ap̄u kuliye (O).

He who does not tire goes to wrestle; a tireless man comes out and stands up with him.

332. Nwanza ni n' ana fenyili be n' ododo igu ; ikuku bueya
bunye enu budeye n' ana nwanza si ikuku naiya no
nnękwonneya na nękwọ nnaiya.

Nwanza* flies up from the ground and stops on the end of a palm leaf ; the wind lifts it up and drops it down ; the bird says to the wind, he was in charge of his mother and in charge of his father.

GOOD FORTUNE.

333. Qbwọ onye kpanari onye na nku, osi nia bata n'
ajoifia (O).

One companion gets more wood than another. They say he goes to the bad bush.

334. Mbwada dal'ibi abugwolu ofa' dinta (A).

The buck with elephantiasis is a piece of luck for the hunter.

335. Okātá qbíta anakpa ákwà mwọ (O).

Sudden misfortune weaves cloth (for burial).

INCOMPETENCE.

336. Obial' izu, amwag' ife kulu (A).

He comes to a meeting and doesn't know what they are talking about.

337. Akwọ n' azu mwà qkba anākbum n' ani ; rapum, ka
njili qkbam jẹbe (A).

I am carried on someone's back but my foot reaches the ground ; let me go that I may take my feet and walk.

338. Okenye j'oku, m'oku ; qnq n'onq akęyama (O).

Great man goes to a case and says nothing ; he who stays at home is better.

TASTES.

339. Mwadu edęi akeya arainyelu ibie oyi (O).

A man does not take his hand to choose a friend for another.

* A small bird.

340. Onye nḡli nni, k'ḡnagu.
If a man eats something (it is) that he's hungry.
Everyone is not alike.

MISCELLANEOUS.

341. Agadi ádakánka n' egu omalo eté (O).
An old man is not too old for a dance he has learnt.
342. Osa gu onye n' qno, òrḡ (O).
If a man has no answer to make he can hang.
343. Agadiḡwaiyi nabw'qsḡ enugu, qḡḡ ifè n' ife naḡuya (O).
If an old woman runs up a hill, she is running after something
or something is running after her.
When they ask a traveller why he comes.
344. Bokḡbampa alo gḡbafolu di ikè (A).
Cunning kills the strong man.
345. Nḡiči se : na ḡku ya beḡe anaraḡu eḡu (A).
The rodent ulcer says : the palm tree that it cuts never fails.
A man doesn't upset arrangements.
346. Onye oku vḡlumnḡḡ n'qno, neḡi oruku apḡtiya.
A man whose word stays long in his mouth can get a shilling to
take it out.
One who refuses to explain a quarrel and settle it.
347. Áḡò nokatalo, kḡpḡḡie ḡti, si na ifunainya ka eno na ḡti
mwa (A).
The leopard hears too much and shuts its ears. It says: seeing
is better than hearing.
If a man has no ears he is not deceived.
348. Qli qḡu ana, neli ogu qkḡḡ (A).
A man who eats 20 plots of ground has eaten 20 fists.
A man who claims much has many quarrels.
349. Eḡjune ḡ'ile qmwa ago n'ógu (A).
A snail takes a good tongue to pass over a splinter.

350. Ogu ǣjune adabwa mmē (O).

The shell of the snail has no blood.

Asking a stranger to leave a country alone.

351. Ókụ nǝli mbwani ; mbwani načo ísí aǵuani n'ísí esu (O).

Fire catches underground ; under the surface the ground looks for the head of a bad snake and the head of a millipede.

The white man has taken the black man's country, when no one expected it.

352. N̄wa nnaya zilolo ori, n̄abwa na mbó.

A child sent by his father to steal, knocks at the door.

One who fears nothing will ask for anything.

353. Afqm zim olo (A).

Afqm zim ori (O).

Hunger sends me thieving.

354. Iwe bu álo (A).

Iwe bu nsq (O).

Anger brings the forbidden thing

An angry man doesn't care what he does.

355. Omakam ife ; k'asiya lača ñkpili akiya ; olure qno (O).

He knows much, let them tell him to lick his elbow and the mouth does not reach.

Of a man who visits his father-in-law, but can't pay for his wife

356. N̄woke ony' Ukbo si : rapu ife, k'qkwolo, k'qkwo ; n'onye qnēče, k'qnēče (O).

A man of Ukbo says : leave the thing alone, let it wait, and who waits for it, let him wait.

A servant says this to one who can't deliver a message.

357. Qnqdo nagu ñgwęle, m'ǵdodo ękwęreya qnqđò.

To sit down is the lizard's desire, but its tail prevents it from sitting.

358. Adaka ɛlil' ɛnu, abid' ɛlil' enu, amal'onye qgqđq di n'ukwe.

Adaka climbs and ape climbs, and they know whom the loin cloth fits.

If too many people argue they must have some test to decide.

359. Ōjuju tɛkaka, abwɛliya ofiɔ (A)

Ūjuju tɛkaka; abainye oyò (O).

Ojuju is too far, snap your fingers.

Sour grapes.

360. Qburq j' ɔg' Itù n' ɛjɛrɔ, n'ola (O).

It is not a question of going to the battle of Itu or not going ; it's sleepiness.

Of a forgetful man.

361. Oke neli onye, nafwiya.

When a rat gnaws some one, it blows him.

Flattery.

362. Apal'ozu, azačala onq.

When the body is carried out, the house is swept out.

A reply to threats.

363. Aso ñwata bu qvivi, amu qsq luya (O).

They tell the child to whistle and it wants to laugh.

Shyness.

364. Di bu ɛlili, mwa ñwunye bu ñgugu ; elili tibɛlu, ñgugu abatq (O).

The husband is the bond, the wife is the bundle ; if the bond is cut, the bundle lies open.

When two people have a private arrangement and quarrel others hear of it.

365. Abù onye jiso okqlqbia, ka oji alo ji (O).

The song a man knows as a young man he can take to work yams.

366. Ony' ibi nekučal' ola, abatobi, si n' ola agara n' ainya (O).

An elephantiasis patient snores, and neighbours say that sleep does not come to their eyes.

367. Óko si na oráí ba n' onq.

If fire comes from the Orai it goes through the house.

Orai is the big medicine ; this means that if the brother of a witch dies the witch has killed him.

368. Dinta amwana mbwada bu qbia (A).

The hunter does not know that the duiker is a doctor.

That is to say a man does not know the power of his opponents.

369. Dibia anarabia mwa ekuroiya eku (A).

Dibia adapqta onwiye, mwa akpwiya (O).

A doctor does not come out of himself if they don't call him.

He might be accused of poisoning if he did.

370. Onyala si ekwe nku, ej' isi esu (O).

A madman says : the drums are sounding and they take his head to knock them.

For a man who refuses to go into court with his opponents.

371. Mbwafu okokbolo, r'adaña okwà, ofu ite na ofu qko (A).

The flitting of a bachelor, what's it like ? One cooking pot and one soup pot.

372. Atoa ogù qbul' iyì (O).

If you put poison down it is medicine.

373. Atani si iwunye : bokwanum egu : k'ya nq n'onq ;
maka yapu, qbq imamaziya (O).

The bush rat says to his wife : you must dash him for his dancing so that he may stay at home because if he goes to the dancing place, she won't recognize him.

374. Ebwé fulu nwa qkoko, čofu, buluya ; nwqkoko bq nniye
bq nnaiya, si : naiya nakbq nkpu k'qra nol' onuya,
n'qbqrq na ife jiye gareya (A).

The hawk sees a chicken and catches it, and carries it off ; the chicken cries to its mother and its father ; it says it cries that people may hear its voice, not because the thing that catches it will leave it.

375. Eyi sële : ekwale ekaya no, okbaka si welu gbq wataleya (A).

The rat says : look where he was ; the oil seed broke and bit him.

Proving an alibi.

376. Akbi si naiya bò qfunainya na nnaiya iyì (A).

The scorpion says that he is a proof that his father is medicine.
If one denies and another proves his ability to do a certain thing.

377. Anam enegi ainya, k'ísí egu nèn' obu.

I look at you as the skull of a goat looks at the obu.
When they are sharing out meat and a man asks the divider if he has got his portion.

378. Ikbakpa si na obwo onye naṭoya ākwà.

The Ikbakpa says that its companions take off its cloth.

379. Onye atogo ago egu, onuye qṛaka onu²efi.

If a man does not fear a leopard, his neck is as thick as a cow's.

380. Qdḡguma nol' ife nol' enyi.

Odogoma swallows the thing that swallows the elephant.

381. Qtagwo oji na nzizo.

He has eaten kola secretly (has been bribed).

CONVERSATION.

John (an Oniča boy).

Nwile (a Nibo boy).

Diai.

My friend.

Kḡdi k' ime.

How do you do ?

Ibu ony' ḡbe.

Where do you come from ?

Ò, Ó.

O.

Ainya nalokḡ ḡlu n'ofu ḡbe.

We finish work in one place.

Ainyi bialu obobo ndia.

We have come to this place.

Ẹ.

Yes.

anom ḡfuma.

I am well.

Abum onye Nibo.

I am a Nibo man.

Nḡo.

Welcome.

Omwaká nḡfo.

Good so.

Ẹ, ainyi bialu Umuḡuku tata.

We came to Umucuku to-day.

1913 Tremearne Hausa.pdf

HAUSA SUPERSTITIONS AND CUSTOMS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FOLK-LORE AND
THE FOLK

BY

MAJOR A. J. N. TREMEARNE

B.A.(Cantab.), F.R.G.S., F.R.A.I.

*Sometime Scholar and Prizeman, Christ's College,
Hausa Lecturer and First Diplômé in Anthropology, Cambridge.*

Of Gray's Inn, Barrister-at-Law.

Author of "The Tailed Head-Hunters of Nigeria,"

"Some Austral-African Notes and Anecdotes,"

"The Niger and the West Sudan,"

"Fables and Fairy Tales,"

&c.

*WITH FORTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS, OVER TWO HUNDRED
FIGURES IN THE TEXT, AND A MAP*

London

JOHN BALE, SONS & DANIELSSON, LTD.

OXFORD HOUSE

83-91, GREAT TITCHFIELD STREET, OXFORD STREET, W.

—
1913

inveterate¹ gambler, too, so there are many convenient ways of losing money, and alas! loaded cowries are not unknown, for it is not only a blind man who cheats. The Mohammedan Filani did all they could to put down this vice, but the native servant now asks why he should not play jack-stones if his master plays bridge! There are non-gambling games resembling "noughts and crosses," the "race-game," and "hi cockalorum," but there are much more sober amusements also, such as the propounding of riddles, quotation of proverbs, playing on words, counting-games, and, of course, the telling of tales.

RIDDLES.—Some of the best known riddles are :—

(1) I have two coats, the one which I always wear is new, the one which I do not wear is old. Answer : A road—which soon becomes impassable in West Africa if not used.

(2) I have two roads open, though I follow the wrong one, I am not lost. Answer : A pair of loose and shapeless Hausa trousers.

(3) The master is inside the hut, but his beard is outside. Answer : A fire, the smoke of which escapes through the thatch.

(4) The daughters of our house are always washing. Answer : The small saucers (gourds) used to bale out water from the large pots, and left floating in them.

(5) God has saddled him, but I shall not mount. Answer : A scorpion.

(6) The daughters of our house never go to the bush but they clap first. Answer : The wood-pigeons, which make a noise when flapping their wings.

(7) Red fell down, red picked it up. Answer : A ripe fan-palm fruit (see LXXX, 9), picked up by a Filani (called "red," as are Europeans).

(8) The house of the youths is full of meat.
Answer : An egg.

(9) The great twins turned around, but they did not meet. Answer : The ears.

(10) I washed my calabash, I went east with it, I went west with it, but it did not dry. Answer : A dog's tongue.

(11) I have a thousand cows, but only one rope to tie them with. Answer : A broom—which is simply a number of twigs tied together.

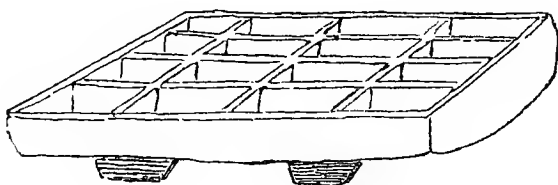


FIG. 16.



FIG. 17.

FIGS. 16 and 17.—Boards for the game of *darra*, which resembles backgammon to some extent. The pieces may be specially made, or merely stones ; used sparklets are in great request. L., 15 in. and 25½ in. respectively.

(12) The cows are lying down, but the big bull is standing up. Answer : The stars and the moon.

(13) A very tiny thing can bind up the traders' loads. Answer : A packing-needle.

The list of riddles could be greatly extended, but these will be sufficient to give an idea of the Hausa train of thought ; those who wish to see other examples

are recommended to read the books already mentioned. Parallels to these could be given, but as I have no space to go more fully into this part of the subject, I will merely point out that numbers 3 and 11, and a variant of 9, have been noted in Sierra Leone (*Cunnie Rabbit*, page 193 *et seq.*).

PROVERBS.—But if riddles are numerous, what can be said of the proverbs? Some examples have been given already, but perhaps a few more will not be out of place, for they cover almost every subject imaginable, and many old friends will be recognized in spite of a dress suitable for the Tropics. Judging by the behaviour of most of the Hausas one meets, forethought is quite unnecessary; yet “The day on which one starts is not the time to commence one’s preparations,” which include the hollowing out of the gourd or traveller’s water-bottle. “I won’t break the large pot (which corresponds to our tank) in the house until the new one has been brought,” for “It is only when the quiver is quite full that it is necessary to pull some of the arrows partly out,” so as to get at them quickly. The blind man cannot see our bitter grapes, although “Since he lacks eyes he says that eyes smell.” But few normal people believe this, for “seeing is better than hearing,” of course, although “The one-eyed man thanks God only when he has seen a man who is totally blind.” Like a burnt child, “If the blind man has scorched his ground-nut once, he will eat it raw next time,” instead of trying to cook it again. “Although the eye is not a measure, it knows what is small,” and “Even without measuring (one knows that), a bridle is too large for a hen’s mouth.”

Since murder will out, “Dig the hole of evil shal-

low," else the wrongdoer may not be able to get out again. At any rate do not cry until you are out of the wood, for "If the bush is still burning, the locust will not congratulate her mother" on her escape, and be on your guard, for "The eye which sees the smoke will look for fire."

With us, a physician might have to be told to heal himself, and "If the hyæna had known how to cure

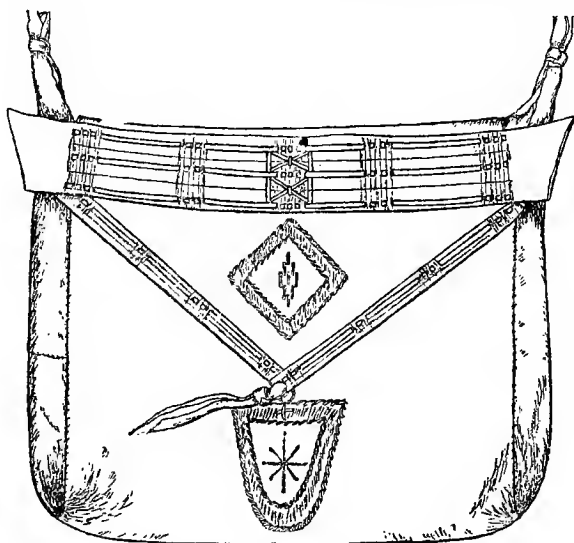


FIG. 18.—Haversack of red leather, turned inside out, black sides and border. The upper pattern is in green stitches on red, and in black stitches on green. Lower pattern in green stitches on red, and in black stitches on yellow; centre of lower pattern in black ink. $12\frac{3}{8}$ in. \times $9\frac{1}{4}$ in.

herself of small-pox, she would have done so." Still, all is more or less in vain, for "The man who must die, medicine will not save." At the same time, "He who is sick will not refuse medicine," and like the Devil, "It is when one is in trouble that one remembers God."

Although "The legs of another (man) are no good for travelling" in many cases, "He who is carried

does not realize that the town is far off "; at any rate, " To have (a horse) is better than to be able (to ride)." Certainly " An egg in the mouth is better than a hen in the coop " where a wild-cat may get it. " Hurry is not strength," and " The one who makes useless fuss will meet with obstructions "; for it is only " By travelling ' softly, softly ' that you will sleep far away."

Even if his shoe does not pinch him, " The owner of the house knows in what spot the water will drip on him " from a leaky grass roof, and " He who runs from the white-ant may stumble upon the stinging-ant," though he may not have a frying-pan on the fire. Beware of great bargains, for " Whoever wants to make an exchange does not want his own property," so there may be something wrong with it.

Birds of a feather may fly together, but " Fire and cotton will not be found in the same place," for the latter would be burnt up if near the flame. Eggs and stones also are not good neighbours, for there is no connection between them, and " Who would compare a fish and a tick? " Again, " A man will not enter a slaughter-yard if he is afraid of the sight of blood," but " Evil knows where evil sleeps."

Although it may be quite true that " A chief is like a dust-heap where everyone comes with his rubbish (complaint) and deposits it," everyone likes power, for " A wealthy man will always have followers." In fact, according to the hen, " It is not the obtaining of food which is hard, it is (the finding of) a place where you can go and eat it which is so difficult." There ought to be some consideration even here, for " Blood is not demanded from a locust," any more than from a stone. " The value of relationship lies in the feet," because if a relative does not care for you he will not

trouble to come to your house. The rich man, lest he be apt to belittle the sufferings of poor people, must remember that "The stone which is in the water does not know that the hill is (parched) in the sun."

"A man's disposition is like the marks in a stone, no one can efface it," or them rather, and "Everyone has his own peculiarities: a one-eyed man would look sideways down a bottle," for instance. Again, while "Some birds avoid water, the duck seeks it." This is quite natural, for as in the case of a house, "At the same time as the wall itself is built, the finger-marks on it are made," and a man cannot avoid his fate. Certainly "If there is a continual going to the stream (or well), one day there will be a smashing" of the pitcher, and "However hard a thing be thrown up, to earth it will fall" again, so it is a mistake that "The Dodowa (block of pounded black locust-tree seeds) calls the dark salt (from Bornu) black."

The Hausas, having no wagons, cannot very well hitch them to stars, but "If the vulture satisfies you, the guinea-fowl will fly off with her beautiful marks," for birds in such different sets could not possibly associate. Now, "Blood has more dregs than water," and since "We are mice of the same hole, if we do not meet when going in, we do so when going out," in fact, like father, like son, or rather, "The son and his father cannot be distinguished." Even if not as much alike as two peas, "On seeing them, one would say 'A calabash cut in half.'" One must be careful, for "If you despise (a man solely because of his) appearance, you may be sorry," "It is not the eye which understands, but the mind." Take the mote out of your own eye, for "Faults are like a hill, you stand on your own, and then talk about those of other people."

wanna takarda yafito waje alkali lokoja || yagaida
 This letter it comes from the (native) judge (of) Lokoja, he salutes
bature fulishi baya gaisuwana wanna || yaro
 the white man (i/c) police. In addition to my greetings (I send you) this youth,
sunansa aliyu yafasa yarinyanakayi || jiya daderre niku'a
 his name Aliyu, (for) he broke the girl on the head yesterday at night. As for me,
natanbayeshi aikida shikiyi || ya gayamini shina'yi
 I asked him the work that he does, (and) he told me (that) he is doing
aiki gumna sabanda hakana banyimasa ||
 work (for the) Government. On account of thus (that) I did not give to him
hukunshiba nakawoshi gareka domin
 judgment (I did not try the case). I bring (send) him to you so that
kayimashi || hukunshi baya gawanna engayamaka
 you may give him judgment. In addition to this I report to you (that)
wani || mutumi da ankakama jiyadaderre wuri da
 a certain man who was caught yesterday at night (in the) place where
ankayi gobara || anchi shiyasa wuta niku'a natanbayeshi
 there was a fire, it is said (of him that) he lit the fire. As for me, I asked him,
|| yachi bashiyasa wutaba niku'a nakaishi gida
 (but) he said it was not he (who) lit the fire. As for me, I put him in the house (of)
dogari domin ingari yawayi enkawo
 the chief's police so that when the town was astir (day broke) I might bring
makashi || shiku'a yagudu gida dogari
 to you him. (But) as for him, he escaped (from the) house (of) the chief's police
dudanarri
 both he and the handcuffs.

wanna takarda yafito waje alkali tokoja yagaida ||
 This letter it comes from the (native) judge (of) Lokoja, he salutes
bature kulfau baya gaisuwa engayamaka ||
 the white man (i/c) the whips (police). In addition to the greeting, I report to you
wanga mache tazo gareni sunanta iyuwaje || sunan
 (that) this woman she came to me, her name (is) Iyuwaje, (and) the name of
da uwantanan amiye sungayamini || sarkin gubi
 her mother (with her is) Amiye. They told me (that) the Chief of Gbebe
yada'mesu su || sunada shari'a da sarkin gubi ||
 he is persecuting them, they, they have a case against the Chief of Gbebe;
*yanzu nan sunkazo wurina .: je * || dumin kazi(ji)*
 only now they have come to me, so that you may hear
abinda ke chakaninsu || da sarkin gubi
 the matter which is (in dispute) between them and the Chief of Gbebe.

N.B.—The Alkali of Lokoja, or his clerk, does not write good Hausa, and there are several mistakes in his letters which are too obvious to need any remark here.

VII.—A HAUSA LETTER.

* The writer has omitted to mention the sending of the complainants to me.

وَنَشْ تَكُرْدَا يَإِيَّاطُو فَوَجِي الْفَافِ لَوُكُوْبَا
 يَإِيَّاعِيْدَ بَشُوْرِي فِلِشْ بَايَا غَيْشُوْرَا وَنَشْ
 يَإِيَّازْ شَوْنَشْ عَلِي يَإِيَّاقَشْ يَإِيَّازْ تَرَكِي
 جِيْ جِيْ دَجَرِي نِيْكَدَا نَا تَشِيْشْ أَنْيْكَدْ شِيْكَ
 يَإِيَّاعِيْمِي شَتَغِيْرِي أَنْيْكَدْ غَمَرْ سَتَبَنَدْ تَكُنَا بَشِيْشْ
 حُكُنْشِيْ تَاكَدْ وَفُوشْ غَبْرِيْكَ دَوْمِيْ كِيْمَشْ
 حُكُنْشِيْ ۞ بَايَا غَوْنَشْ إِنْغِيْشْ وَنَشْ
 مُشْمُ دَحْنُكَدَا جِيْ دَجَرِي فُوْرِيْ دَأَنْكِيْ غَوْنَزَا
 أَفْشِيْ شِيْشِيْشُوْرَا نِيْكَدَا نَا تَشِيْشْ
 يَشِيْشِيْ بَاشِيْشِيْشُوْرَا نِيْكَدَا نَا كَشِيْشْ غِيْدَا
 دَوْنِيْ دَوْمِيْ إِنْغِيْشْ يَإِيَّازْ إِنْكَدْ وَتَكُنْشِيْ
 شِيْكَدَا يَإِيَّاعِيْدَ غِيْدَا دَوْنِيْ دَوْنِيْ

وَنَشْ تَكُرْدَا يَإِيَّاطُو فَوَجِي الْفَافِ لَوُكُوْبَا يَإِيَّاعِيْدَ
 بَشُوْرِيْ كَلْفُوْرَا بَايَا غَيْشُوْرَا إِنْغِيْشْ
 وَنَقَامَشِيْ تَادُوْرْ غَبْرِيْ شَوْنَشْ إِنْغِيْشْ
 شَوْنَشْ دَأَغُوْرُوْشْ عَمِيْ شَوْنَشْ
 شَرِيْكَ غَوْرِيْ يَإِيَّاعِيْشْ شَرِيْ
 شَتْ شَرِيْشَا دَشَرِيْكَ غَوْرِيْ
 يَشْتَشْ شَتْ دَوْنِيْ دَوْنِيْ
 دَوْمِيْ كَدَا آيَنَدَ كِيْ تَاكَدْ
 دَشَرِيْكَ غَوْرِيْ

Politeness will not do anyone harm, for "Bowling to a dwarf will not prevent your standing erect again." Nor will unselfishness, for "If you love yourself others will hate you, if you humble yourself others will love you." You must not expect rewards for nothing, "The prize for the race is given to the hare, and the frog must accept the fact." Remember that "God is the All-wise, not his slave" (man), for often "Lack of knowledge is darker than night," and "A fool is always a slave." Be content with what you have, "It is easier to plaster up (the old wall) than to build a new one," and remember that "There are three friends in this world—courage, sense, and insight"; and there are five of which a man should be suspicious, *viz.*: "A horse, a woman, night, a river, and the forest."

PUNS, &C.—Next we come to the plays on words, some being in the form of our "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper," some being merely puns. Of the first, the best known is probably the following about the seven crocodile-skins, and it must be rendered in Hausa, of course, to see the alliteration, the point being that in saying this over very quickly a word will probably be said in the wrong place, and so the sense will be altered.

*Sa(ɾ)riki ya aiko en kai ma-sa patar kaddan Kano bokkoi,
 Ban kasshe patar kaddan Kano bokkoi ba,
 Na kai ma-sa patar kaddan Kano bokkoi?
 Bara da na kasshe kaddan Kano bokkoi
 Ai na kai ma-sa patar kaddan Kano bokkoi.*

A better one (L.T.H., page 292) runs:—

*Da kwado da kato suka teffi neman koto,
 Kwado ne zai ma kato koto,
 Ko kuwa kato ne zai kwache ma kwado koto.*

The translation is :—

A Frog and a Slave went to seek for food.
The Frog wanted to take the food from the Slave,
And again the Slave wanted to take the food from the
Frog.

The following one is given in *Hausa Sayings* :—

*Kunun kuki, kunun kunkuki mutanen kuki, ga
kununku.*
Ku uku, ku sha da sainya safe.

Broth of the kuki-tree, broth of the kunkuki, O men of
Kuki, behold your broth.
You three, drink it in the cool of the morning.

One (in *Hausa Proverbs*) runs :—

Babba ba ya babba baba ba.

Puns on words are met with. One is given in F.-L.
11, others occur in Story 74. One more is :—

Zumu Zumua ne relatives are like honey.

But in the pronunciation of

Gata, iyaka ta kama gatan iyaka

The day after to-morrow your mother will catch the
sentry on the boundary

great care must be taken, for a slight change will make
the last two words read “ your mother’s hinder parts.”
There is a similar catch in *gatan birri*, a baboon.

A play upon words is not always appreciated, and
when a man who has promised to give a boy as wages
abinchin nama (food with meat in it) and he tries to
palm off *abin chin nama* (a thing to eat meat with,

e.g., a knife), he is taken to the Alkali (from the Arabic *Al kadî*), and punished.

Even our celebrated word sequence to prove that "a lie is nothing" (lie—story—tale, tail—brush—conveyance—jin, gin—spirit—ghost—shadow—nothing) has its Hausa counterpart, though the latter is in the form of question and answer: "How art thou?—I am sick. Art thou not reclining?—I recline, am I a king? Does not one beat the drum for the king?—Beat a drum for me! Am I a state-camel?* Does not the camel carry a load?—Carry a load! Am I a donkey? Does one not beat a donkey?—I have a beating! Am I a thief? Does not one tie up a thief?—Tie me up! Am I a lizard?† Does not one eat the lizard?—Eat‡ me! Am I a market? Does not the market rise?—Rise? Am I a hawk? Does not the hawk carry off the young chicken?—Carry off the young chicken! Am I a wild-cat?"|| And so on,§ but there is no definite goal to be reached as in the English proposition, the length of the game varying in proportion to the ingenuity of the performers.

Some games seem to have a hidden meaning, and I have two in one of my old note-books. One goes: "One it is (1), two it is (2), they have been eaten (3) the white (4) pumpkins (5), You (6), O Hen (7), what has brought you (8) to the nest? (9). An egg (10)." The meaning is that the hen mistook the little pumpkins for eggs. Unfortunately I was not able to go over the next one during my last tour, and I cannot explain its full meaning. It runs: "I ran away, with a *gurr* (1), I

* Some are furnished with drums as in our mounted bands.

† An edible variety.

‡ A play on the word *chi*, which means *inter alia* eat, and hold (market).

|| Both of these prey on the chickens, of course, as will be seen in Stories 22 and 21, &c.

§ *Hausa Sayings*, page 60.

climbed a rock to the south (2), see me (3), I have finished (4). Truly (5), the drummers of the south (6) can sew (7) a drum (8) on top of (9) a bird (10).” This does not sound very illuminating, but that is my own fault. These two were said to be counting-games (hence the numbers in parentheses inserted in the places indicated by the narrator), and they may correspond in some degree to a Jewish poem, the last verse of which is “Who knoweth thirteen? I saith Israel know thirteen: thirteen divine attributes, twelve tribes, eleven stars, ten commandments, nine months preceding childbirth, eight days preceding circumcision, seven days of the week, six books of the Mishnah, five books of the Law, four matrons, three patriarchs, two tables of the Covenant; but One is our God Who is over the heavens and the earth.”* I do not say that there is any direct connection between the above, in fact, another man told me that the second saying was invented simply to confuse non-Hausas (*cf.* our selling sea-shells on the sea-shore), but there certainly is between the latter and the following: What is one in the world?—There is no other one (God) but Allah. What are two in the world?—There are no other two but day and night. What are three in the world?—There are no other three but fire and food and water. What are four in the world?—There are no four but the legal wives, whoever goes beyond four is punished. What are five in the world?—There are no five but chieftainship, a horse, a cow, a son, and health. What are six in the world?—There are no six but the shames (generally nine). What are seven in the world?—There are no seven but the hand. What are eight in the world?—There are no eight but the eyes. What are nine in the

* Tylor, *op. cit.*, page 87.

world?—There are no nine but that man is in the womb nine months, he does not reach ten. When he has been there nine months, if the mother has not miscarried, he is born. What is ten in the world?—There is no ten but a corpse (*i.e.*, finished).

“I met a man going to St. Ives” has some resemblance to the following: A man had a fowl, and the fowl had forty chicks. The fowl and each chick had forty eggs each and all were hatched. How many fowls were there then?

Lastly, I might mention that there is a game in which the players must give the names of an animal, a bird, and a fish three times without any hesitation, changing the name in each case thus: Lion, eagle, frog-bellied fish; hyæna, vulture, cat-fish; dog, sparrow, electric-eel—an easy thing to write, but difficult to say quickly in the proper order.

POETRY.—It must not be thought, however, that the Hausa has no better literature than word-games. Some religious poems are given in Canon Robinson's *Specimens of Hausa Literature*,* the following extracts from which will probably be sufficient to give an idea of their beauty. It will be seen that the writers have been influenced by their Islamic training:—

“Thou who art puffed up with pride because of thy relations, thy kingdom, or thy property, on the day when thou meetest with the angels, thou shalt be confounded. . . .

This world, thou knowest, is a market-place; everyone comes and goes, both stranger and citizen.”

* Pages 2, 4, 24, 26, 28, 38, 46, and 80, respectively, a few slight changes have been made. It is extremely difficult to procure any writings in Hausa, nearly all are in Arabic. The ink is obtained from the fruit of the *farra-kaya*, a large white-thorn tree, the pens are reeds or pointed sticks, the paper is imported.

1914 Ellis Vai.pdf

Ans
E 474 n

NEGRO CULTURE IN WEST AFRICA

A SOCIAL STUDY OF THE NEGRO GROUP OF VAI-SPEAKING PEOPLE
WITH ITS OWN INVENTED ALPHABET AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE
SHOWN IN TWO CHARTS AND SIX ENGRAVINGS
OF VAI SCRIPT, TWENTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS OF
THEIR ARTS AND LIFE, FIFTY FOLKLORE STORIES,
ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEEN PROVERBS AND ONE MAP

By

GEORGE W. ELLIS, K.C., F.R.G.S.

For eight years Secretary of the United States Legation in
Liberia; author of "Liberia in the Political Psychology
of West Africa," "Islam as a Factor in West
African Culture," "Dynamic Factors in
the Liberian Situation," etc.

Introduction by

FREDERICK STARR, B.S., M.S., PH.D., SC.D.

Professor and Curator of Anthropology in the University of Chicago

*To show the world—Africans helping in the work—that the African has a culture of his own—
to explain that culture, and assist him to develop it.—The African Journal and Mary H. Kingsley, p. 7.*

Edward Wilmot Blyden.



NEW YORK
THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY

1914

356608
38.
10.
31.

CHAPTER VIII

VAI PROVERBS

(1)

“**N**O matter how poor an elephant is he cannot cross the bridge.” When some one comes to the king to beg of him when times are a little hard with him he very often says that he is poor himself, but he gives the man something, adding, “No matter how poor an elephant is he cannot cross the bridge,”—meaning that no matter how poor the king may be he cannot allow the man to go without having given him something.

(2)

“The monkey wants to get honey, but he has no ax to cut the tree.” When a poor king is ambitious to build up his town and often remarks what he would do if he only had the money, he is reminded by somebody that “The monkey wants to get honey, but he has no ax to cut the tree.”

(3)

“Black skillet is no good for making soup,” or “Making soup in a black skillet is trouble.” When they see a man doing something that it is thought will lead to trouble they ask the man, “Are you making soup in a black skillet?” It is the general opinion that soup cannot be made in a black skillet without trouble in that it all gets black, or else the person is so poor that he cannot afford to buy a pot.

(4)

"A baboon does not like cola for anything." A baboon was very hungry, and although he was accustomed to eat cola he slept under a cola tree all night, yet he complained of being hungry with cola nuts all about. Sometimes a person asks for something which he thinks he has lost but which is close at hand, perhaps in his pocket; when he finds it he says to himself, "A baboon does not like cola for anything."

(5)

"The pig drinks liquor, but the goat gets drunk." A slave boy raised in a rich family imagines that he can do just as he pleases,—in fact, he ventures to do things that his master would not do. Sometimes when he is doing some of these things he is sure to be told, "The pig drinks liquor, but the goat gets drunk."

(6)

"We catch a catfish because he does not like straw." The catfish when he sees straw in the water begins to fight it, and thus is often baited by it, or, the catfish does not like straw, and that is what makes him come to land. If a man is an enemy to another man and is always working up stories against him, one day instead of the stories injuring the enemy it falls upon the witness, and the people repeat to him the proverb, "The catfish does not like straw, that is why he comes to land."

(7)

"A frightened man will say 'How d'ye do' to a leopard." When two men who have been enemies are

forced into a contest in which they are both on the same side they are often twitted by those who knew of the former enmity by the proverb, "A frightened man will say 'How d'ye do' to a leopard." The leopard is considered a very unfriendly creature in Africa.

(8)

"If a man raises a snake he must tie it." When a man has a bad boy or daughter who is always getting into trouble and he is called on to pay until a time comes when he declines to pay, somebody is sure to urge him to do so by quoting the words, "If a man raises a snake he must tie it."

(9)

"The cow follows the man that has salt." When a man is obliged to seek the favor of a rich man and often does things for nothing in order to get pay for a small job, the question is asked why is he always at the rich man's house. The answer is, "The cow follows the man who has salt."

(10)

"If one man eats beans he makes much straw." When two men have something and it is divided in each other's presence they are both contented. But if one of them is absent the likelihood of his being dissatisfied with the division is very great. In case the division made in the absence of one man happens to be fair and the man who was absent complains when he returns, his complaint is answered with, "If one man eats beans he makes much straw." In the case of beans, the absent man would refer on returning to the great quantity

of hulls as evidence of the fact that much beans had been eaten.

(11)

"A little rain every day will make the rivers swell." People are encouraged to save money by repeating to them this old saying, which is used with respect to all matters that may be accomplished little by little or gradually.

(12)

The frog says, "I have nothing, but I have my hop." When a man is poor yet has something that no one else has in the country he is very proud of it,— for example, medicine. And when persons come to buy often may be heard repeating to himself, "I have nothing, but I have my hop."

(13)

"A man who waits on a monkey in a tree has shot it." A man goes to another man's house who has gone away and has not indicated when he will return. The stranger decides to wait until the man's return, and stays at his house. After a few hours or a day or so some of the family asks the man for what he is waiting. He replies that he is waiting for the return of the man of the house. He is asked if he was told when he would return and he says, "No." Then you may expect to hear, "A man who waits on a monkey in a tree has shot it."

(14)

"If the stomach is full, it is palaver; and if hungry, it is palaver." A poor man visits one man and is well

entertained, and returns home without having made any "dash" for his entertainment. The host of the poor man visits his town, and the poor man is unable to entertain him as he was entertained, but he desires to do something, so he catches a chicken and takes it to the good and kind visitor and presenting it conveys to the visitor an idea of his situation when he repeats: "If the stomach is full, it is palaver; and if hungry, it is palaver." So that hungry or otherwise, it is palaver for the poor man.

(15)

"If I do not go in I must go by." When a native vendor is carrying about his wares sometimes some person will see something he wants and takes it, but he wishes to pay at another time. The vendor is almost sure to refuse credit, and for this purpose it is very convenient to have a proverb: "If I do not go in, I must go by."

(16)

"If I do not go to the Greegree Bush, you must send my cloth." Every person that goes to the greegree bush has her cloth taken from her. If she is finally rejected from the bush, when she leaves she is entitled to have her cloth back. It is the custom in having a big dinner and dance for a number of people to put in their contributions in advance. Those who have so contributed are entitled to the privileges of the dance. Sometimes a person who has so contributed is denied participation at the dinner by mistake,—a mistake that arises from varying causes in management, as, for instance, when the person who admits the people is unacquainted with all who are

entitled to enter. When some one is thus rejected who is entitled to enjoy the privileges of the dinner he is sure to shout out, "If I do not go to the Greegree Bush, you must send my cloth."

(17)

"Hens never promise to give the chickens milk." A rich man very often will promise a poor man to help him, and when he helps the poor man in a way that is proper according to his judgment the poor man will still remain dissatisfied, and ask the rich man for something that he does not wish to give. When the poor man thus insists he is very likely to hear that "Hens never promise to give the chickens milk."

(18)

"If you cannot mend the gourd, how can you fix the bowl?" This saying is often applied to cobblers. For example, a goldsmith representing himself to be able to do all kinds of work, induces a man to give him an important job, but before he enters upon it his customer gives him a small article that he wishes mended. The smith, unable to repair the article, botches the work, yet he wants to undertake the much more important job. The deceived patron answers, "If you cannot mend the gourd how can you fix the bowl?"

(19)

"Why should a naked man fight for soap?" Soap is in great demand among the natives who wear clothes, and sometimes many of them contend over a single piece, but the naked man is seldom if ever seen to trouble himself about it. In native war a strange man in a town

attacked is not expected to fight. If the town should be captured he would be set at liberty upon making known the fact that he was a stranger. But if a stranger should violate the custom and join the town people in resistance and should get killed, people who express their sorrow for him are likely to hear somebody ask, "Why should a naked man fight for soap?"

(20)

"The dog goes to the blacksmith shop for its bell, but what does the cat go for?" The officers and persons who are known to have business with the king may call upon him and remain for hours, and no comments upon their doing so will be made. But if persons whose business are not known,—or whom some people envy because of their favor with the king,—are seen to visit the king too often or to remain what is considered too long, somebody will comment upon it by saying, "The dog goes to the blacksmith shop for its bell, but what does the cat go for?"

(21)

"Man likes a full spoon but not an empty plate." A man who has been rich but who has squandered his money and become an object of pity excites the comment of those who knew him in his better days; and as he passes along the thoroughfare they often mutter to themselves, "Man likes a full spoon but not an empty plate."

(22)

"The man left the other man in one field," or, "The lazy man is always left behind." A man has a son at-

tending school. Every now and then the son finds some excuse to stay out of school, until the father, alarmed, begins to scold, when he is almost sure to say, "The man left the other man in one field," which is to say that two men set out to go to a town, but one of the men trifling along the way was left in one old field.

(23)

"My spear has gone through the banana tree." The banana tree is regarded by the African as a very valuable tree, and it contributes a great deal to his support. No one would knowingly do anything to injure or kill the banana tree. Information reaches the king that a terrible crime has been committed, and very strict orders are issued for the capture of the malefactors. When they are caught and brought before the king he is surprised to find that they are his own kinsmen. He conveys to all the full depth of his sorrow when to himself he sadly repeats, "My spear has gone through the banana tree."

(24)

"If crazy men are in the country, it is not difficult to find slaves." The finer tribes of West Africa believe that one way to get rich is to get a plenty of slaves. They also believe that any person who would consent to be a slave is not possessed of full mental power. A Vai trader had a clerk who was constantly making mistakes, sometimes by giving too much change, and sometimes by selling too cheaply, and in speaking of this clerk a Vai man used this expression, "If crazy men are in the country, it is not difficult to find slaves."

(25)

“The poor man raises children for the rich.” Among the Africans the poor man does not himself consume any very fine commodity that he may raise, but sells it to some rich man. Their children, however, are their most precious jewels. When a poor man, carrying his fine rooster, goat, or cow to a rich man, is asked why he does not keep it and eat it himself, his only answer is the proverb, “The poor man raises children for the rich,” and therefore such small things as fowls, goats, and cows must necessarily belong to the rich, too.

(26)

“The chicken without feathers says, ‘The chicken with feathers gets cold; why do you ask me why I am cold?’” When there is a scarcity of food articles and men of means are unable to buy what they want the friends of a poor man sometimes joke him about the scarcity of his food, and he finds some relief in the old saying: “The chicken without feathers says, ‘The chicken with feathers gets cold; why do you ask me why I am cold?’”

(27)

“The country devil when he has good dress plays in the daytime.” The country devil plays at night when she has not good dress so that she may not be detected and recognized. Her continued influence depends upon the concealment of her identity, and although she is dressed as a man she is nevertheless a woman. The Vai man goes off and makes money and comes home and gives a big dinner in display. He has never given a dinner before. Among the many persons invited to

dine will be some to ask, "Why did this man give this big dinner?" and there will be some to answer, "The country devil when he has good dress plays in the day-time."

(28)

"The person who has not dropped anything will look for it with his foot." A Vai man, with two or three brothers, gets into trouble and must pay a large sum of money. The brothers of the man in trouble go about the town telling the people that they have trouble because their brother has to pay a big sum of money. Later these brothers are seen spreeing away their means, and some one will ask them, "How can you spend your money so when your brother is in trouble?" The brother who is really in trouble remarks, "The person who has not dropped anything will look for it with his foot."

(29)

"The chicken that wastes the palm-oil his leg will be red." In a family where there are several brothers one of them is thought to have committed a theft. The accusers in their zeal to catch the guilty are willing to punish all the brothers when some old head will object on the ground that "The chicken that wastes the palm-oil his leg will be red," and will insist on ferreting out the guilty from the innocent.

(30)

"The man who did not attend the funeral says the dead man had plenty of witch." It is customary among the Vais to examine the dead for a witch by what we

would consider a post-mortem examination. Sometimes they find evidences of no witch, at other times of a small witch, and again of a big witch. When evidence of a small witch is found persons who were not present will circulate reports of the finding of a big witch, illustrating the nature of man to exaggerate. So that when any Vai man begins to tell anything that seems unreasonable, so much so as to be tantamount to a falsehood, the unbelieving quote the proverb, "The man who did not attend the funeral says the dead man had plenty of witch."

(31)

"The paddle you find in the canoe is the paddle that will carry you across." It is a custom among the Vais to send up the country to the King's for slaves; nearly all the time the King has some person or persons imprisoned in sticks to be sold as slaves. Upon application for slaves the King usually sells only those who are in sticks. If the slave-buyers insist on getting more it is pointed out that "The paddle you find in the canoe is the paddle that will carry you across."

(32)

"In the absence of the leopard the bush cat is King of the bush." Sometimes the King visits a neighboring town for a short time. During his absence some people are almost sure to take advantage of the situation and do some wrong. Sometimes in a general spree some persons will get drunk and rage in row and riot, or some ambitious man whom the King has authorized to keep a lookout until his return abuses his authority and by his acts of injustice arouses just indignation, some

of the old reliable people of the town may be seen talking to themselves or to others, during the course of which they will often repeat, "In the absence of the leopard the bush cat is King of the bush."

(33)

"One bad goat will spoil the herd." There is one man who is buying palm-oil in a town. One dishonest man mixes water with his palm-oil and sells it. The man who bought the palm-oil and water gets vexed and refuses to buy any more palm-oil because of this fraud having been practiced upon him. Those who have been honest in making and selling palm-oil and must suffer for another's wrong are reminded that "One bad goat will spoil the herd."

(34)

"The wise man is father of the fool." A rich or intelligent man in Africa is considered a big man, and very often such a man has a bad son or daughter who seems to have none of the attributes of the family and whose conduct repeatedly reflects upon the family name. Sometimes the son will get into trouble as fast as his father gets him out, or the daughter will take up a life of shame and her acts will furnish themes for social gossip. It is under these sad circumstances that we hear, "The wise man is father of the fool."

(35)

"A boil comes on the leg of the small bird." It is a belief that a boil comes on the leg of a small bird because of the difficulty of treating his small and frail limb and that on a large bird they can easily be pre-

vented. When a poor man gets into trouble and is unable to pay and must remain in a native prison he is compared to the little bird with a boil on his limb. If he had the money he could pay and thus, like a big bird's being saved from having a boil, he could avoid imprisonment. So when a man is seen in sticks some passer-by will remark, "A boil comes on the leg of a small bird."

(36)

"The lame man complains of the head of his carrier." A person is in poor circumstances, and in a time of distress a sympathizer and friend takes him in and gives him shelter and food. After a little while the person taken in begins to complain of his food or some inconvenience he has to suffer. When the complaints reach the ears of his friend the Vai man says, "The lame man complains of the head of his carrier."

(37)

"Mushroom in a bugabug hill does not know that the other mushroom has run." Mushrooms are usually found in the Vai country one on one side of the bugabug hill and one on the other side. When one comes out on one side frequently the one on the other side has disappeared. One man gets into trouble and is placed in sticks, and he sends a messenger to his brother or friend to inform him of his trouble. When the messenger arrives he finds in prison the brother or friend, who says to the messenger, "Mushroom in a bugabug hill does not know that the other mushroom has run."

(38)

"Small palm-nuts are not slaves for the large one."

A free-born boy while playing gets into a fight with the King's son. The neighbors gather, and some of them tell the little free-born boy that he should not be fighting with the King's son. In the meantime the father of the little boy appears and overhears the admonition given to his son, and he resents it by saying, "Small palm-nuts are not slaves for the large ones."

(39)

"It is better for a hungry man to go to the owner in the house than to the cook in the kitchen." When the people want to borrow or to buy something on credit sometimes a clerk will pretend that he owns the goods or has power to dispose of them on his own terms to enhance his own personal importance, but he continues to put the people off without disclosing the real owner or his limited authority. Then some of the disappointed will begin to talk about their disappointment, and some one will remind them that "It is better for a hungry man to go to the owner in the house than to the cook in the kitchen."

(40)

"If the man who tends the farm is rich, what must the owner be?" Very often a man who works for another through thrift and economy accumulates considerable property. A stranger in passing by with a person who belongs in the community admires the wealth of the workman and is told that he is only a servant or clerk for another man, when the stranger exclaims, "If the man who tends the farm is rich, what must the owner be?"

(41)

"You do not tell the rice-cutter that he has some rice before him." Sometimes a man will give to another a job of work to do and before the workman has completed it the employer, afraid that it will not be done well, points out in advance, before the workman has turned the work over, certain parts which have not been done, and a favorite retort of the workman is, "You do not tell the rice-cutter that he has some rice before him."

(42)

"A snake can run but he cannot outrun his head." Sometimes a strong young man takes a pride in fighting, and after a few combats is acknowledged as the champion of his neighborhood or his town. One day this young man begins a fight, and a big man in the community, hearing of it, starts out to stop him and to put the young fighter in his proper place. On the way the big man meets one who has been cowed by the strength and valor of the young fighter, and he advises the big man that it is no use for him to go, as he will not be able to conquer the young man. But if the big man is not deterred by these warnings and predictions, it is only necessary for him to say, "A snake can run, but he cannot outrun his head."

(43)

"The man who swims thinks that no one sees his feet." A thief steals something. When the people begin to investigate they find the evidences pointing to one man. They approach him and begin to question

him on the subject and to refer to some of the things that point to him, in the thought, perhaps, that he might confess; but the thief stoutly maintains his innocence, and that so strongly that the people leave him, but they leave with the thief this wise saying, "The man who swims thinks that no one sees his feet."

(44)

"Your food is close to your stomach, but you must put it in your mouth first." Sometimes among the Vais a son or a nephew will take or desire to take the property of his father or uncle without waiting for the ordinary process of Vai custom. The son or nephew as soon as his father or uncle dies proceeds to take what he wants, since it all belongs to him, and he does not quite see the necessity of complying with the custom of carrying everything to the King first. His attention will be called to the irregularity, and perhaps in the conversation some one will re-enforce his remarks by the proverb, "Your food is close to your stomach, but you must put it in your mouth first."

(45)

"No matter how bright the moon shines it is dark in some places." The Vais educate their children, teaching them the Vai script as well as the Arabic, together with the principles of knowledge from an African's standpoint as well as the culture of the Koran and the Arabs. Sometimes the people in a community exert themselves to put every child under the influence of education, but in spite of all their efforts and success in educating him some boy is sure to turn out badly. Then the old

people shake their heads and say, "No matter how bright the moon shines it is dark in some places."

(46)

"When you meet two old ladies together, one is always older than the other." It is common among Africans to comment on one's wealth. A number of young men get together and during the course of the conversation one of them refers to a rich man he knows; another mentions one whom he claims has greater wealth; finally they reach two of whom they are unable to decide which has the greater wealth, and so they agree to take the matter to an old man, who will remind them of the wisdom of the fathers, "When you meet two old ladies together, one is always older than the other."

(47)

"No matter how long a dry leaf remains on the tree sometime it will fall down." The Vais in their large towns have their markets. Sometimes a man is able to secure credit from one of the traders but because he cannot pay he will stop coming to the market. He remains away so long that the trader begins to complain of his not coming, and before he complains long he will find some one who knows the old saying, "No matter how long a dry leaf remains on the tree sometime it will fall down."

(48)

"If you put a stick in a hole it will fool you, but not so with the hand." The Vais are a very intelligent people, and they like to have slaves wait upon them. When a bad slave is sent to do something and fails to do it,

it is certain to furnish a subject for comment afterward among the neighbors. The master puts the blame on the slave, but somebody will transfer it to him saying, "If you put a stick in a hole it will fool you, but not so with the hand," implying that the master should have attended to the matter in person.

(49)

"No matter how much sense, the little boy will get the young cola from the tree." When a Vai man has a very bright boy he trusts him to do little things. He often sends him to market. No matter how satisfactorily the little boy performs this service the day he makes a mistake the father will reprove him, saying, "No matter how much sense, the little boy will get the young cola from the tree." The little boys are sent up the cola trees for colas, and the young colas are not good to eat.

(50)

"When a little boy slips off and goes into the tree and cannot get down he calls for his parents." War breaks out between two tribes, a third tribe declares neutrality, then the King warns all his subjects against taking any part in the war. One of his subjects joins the war in spite of warning, and is captured by the other side. He sends word to his King who declines to have anything to do with him; but the erring man's friends and relatives beg and entreat the King to take up the matter, and they clinch their appeal with the well-known saying: "When a little boy slips off and goes into the tree and cannot get down he calls for his parents,"—a strong plea to the parent feeling.

(51)

"When a small bird says 'I am fat' you make a hole in a little pot and reply, 'If your fat will fill this pot then you are fat.'" In some of the Vai towns there is a man who is always getting into trouble, but he seems to get out every time. One day he gets into trouble from which no one believes he will be able to escape. As it is impossible to fill a pot with a hole in it, they say, "When a small bird says 'I am fat' you make a hole in a little pot and reply, 'If your fat will fill this pot then you are fat,'" which is expressive of their belief in the impossibility of the man's being able to secure his release, and as much as to say, "If you get out of this trouble, you are smart indeed."

(52)

"If you have not carried the war, you must not play fight." When a man has a case and the native lawyer who has promised to appear on the day set for trial for him does not appear the man is sure to complain of this action of the lawyer, which is condemned by the words, "If you have not carried the war, you must not play fight."

(53)

"If you have no one to carry the goat, do not let it go into the mud." If the goat goes into the mud and the owner has no one to carry it and he is obliged to carry it across some place he is sure to get his clothes dirty. A man's son gets into trouble, and the injured party appeals early to the father in the matter, so that the difficulty may be settled without much cost to the

father. But the father declines to have anything to do with it. Fearing that he will be obliged to take it up later when the trouble will be greater, the old saying is brought into service, "If you have no one to carry the goat, do not let it go into the mud."

(54)

"You always say a leopard's hide in speaking of its skin." When a man is King with much wealth sometimes through some misfortune or difficulty he suddenly becomes poor. The African looks down upon a poor man. Some of the people are likely in fun or in earnest to remind the King of his former wealth and his present poverty. His reply is likely to be, "You always say a leopard's hide in speaking of its skin."

(55)

"A shame man cannot eat crawfish." The people like crawfish, but if they eat it they make noise in cracking the encasing and the neighbors will call for some, hence they say, "A shame man cannot eat crawfish." Sometimes a man has another man arrested for some offense, but the arrested man, by his own talk or the influence and talk of his friends, frightens the person who had him arrested so that the prosecution halts and wavers. The prosecutor is advised to drop the matter, and although he does not carry forward his case he declines to dismiss it and recites the story of the crime or offense. After a time some one, observing that the man is afraid to do anything, expresses his disgust in this way, "A shame man cannot eat crawfish."

(56)

“ Bugabug-hill says, ‘ If you do not want people to mash you, do not let the mushroom come.’ ” Some people like many friends and have many visitors, and some of them are sure to give trouble. So a friend or a member of your family will advise you against having so many friends, and they will give as their authority, “ Bugabug hill says, ‘ If you do not want people to mash you, do not let the mushroom come.’ ”

(57)

“ If a frizzled chicken lives in a town, the town cannot burn.” Among the Vais to eat a frizzled chicken is good luck. Among the Vais there are some men who devote their time to peacemaking. When two men quarrel they go to them and stop it. If war is about to break out, they take up the causes with both sides in the interest of peace. In every difficulty their good influences and offices are felt for good. They are regarded as a blessing to any community. And so they live in those wise sayings that are handed down from generation to generation, “ If a frizzled chicken lives in a town, the town cannot burn.”

(58)

“ No man leaves the doctor’s work for nothing.” The Zo is the head of the Greegree Bush, an institution for the training of young Vai girls. The Zo is at the head of a great many things, and one of the departments under her is medicine. It is a position of great authority and influence. Besides being a good singer, one must belong to a family of money or power, for at the death

of the Zo two slave money (about six pounds sterling) is to be paid by the family of the deceased to the King, or the Zo cannot be buried. On the one hand people are attracted by the prominence and importance of the position, and on the other they are repelled by its grave responsibilities. When it is refused it is for good and fundamental reasons. When a man hires one man to do a piece of work and he goes off without finishing it sometime this workman meets his former employer and is asked why he did not do the work; being ashamed to give the reason he says that there was none. The employer insists to the contrary, for "No man leaves the doctor's work for nothing."

(59)

"An old hen cannot turn the town for nothing." A hen that will not attend to her chickens or hatch her eggs is likely to be sold from one person to another until she is sold around the town. So that when you see a hen that has gone the round something is wrong with her. A man brings you a good-looking boy and you buy him. Later you ascertain that the boy steals. The Vai man in commenting on the boy is sure to bring up that "An old hen cannot turn the town for nothing."

(60)

"If a billy goat has his jewelry twenty years with the silver smith, how many more years has he to dress?" The billy goat has whiskers and some people put little bags around his neck. The billy goat could hardly live anything like twenty years. His day for dressing is short. When you take your goods to the Vai tailor to be made and every time you call he has not commenced

the work but promises and puts you off you are sure to get tired after many postponements, and you indignantly ask, "If a billy goat has his jewelry twenty years with the silver smith, how many more years has he to dress?"

(61)

"If you do not know two, look at the goat's head." The goat has two horns, as everybody knows. Whenever a Vai man wants to insinuate that you do not possess ordinary sense,—as when he is trying to explain to you something very plain to himself, something that you cannot see nor understand,—he dismisses the matter in contempt, by saying, "If you do not know two, look at the goat's head."

(62)

"The grippa feeds itself upon its own little fish." Some poor Vai men have a number of boys in the family, such as nephews, cousins, etc. Every now and then he sells one to some rich man. Some of his own relatives do not like this selling of the family, and finally a protest is made. The explanation is that the boys are to be redeemed, and when pressed too much comes the vexed retort, "The grippa feeds itself upon its own little fish."

(63)

"When you cook dogmeat eat it hot, for when it is cold it smells badly." A Vai king announces that he will carry war on the Golas, a neighboring tribe, but he does not do so at once. He allows much time to pass, and the Golas get prepared for the attack. In support

of abandoning the attack an adviser quotes among his reasons, "When you cook dogmeat eat it hot, for when it is cold it smells badly."

(64)

"A small string brings down a big bunch of grass." Mandingan grass is kept in the lofts of Vai houses. In taking down the grass by the blade, a single blade will almost invariably bring down a large bunch. A rich man injures several members of a family and escapes any punishment. By-and-by he does some little thing to another member of the family, and very heavy damages are insisted upon for this damage that is trivial in comparison with what he has done to other members of the same family and escaped without punishment. The man is now brought to pay for all the wrongs against this family through the occasion of this one little wrong, and astounded at the injustice of the claim he minimizes the wrong he has done; but somebody recalls to him that "A small string brings down a big bunch of grass."

(65)

"When you are troubled in mind and your slave runs away you put your hand in your pocket." A Vai man gets into serious trouble, and in his confusion of mind he goes for help to another man who is not his friend, and the man refuses to aid him. He relates the incident to a friend who reproves him for going to this man for help, and there we have an occasion for the saying: "When you are troubled in mind and your slave runs away you put your hand in your pocket," yet your slave is not in your pocket.

(66)

"You wash your mouth with cassava and it is good for the stomach." There is a custom among the Vais of eating raw cassava, and it is called washing the mouth. Among the Bussi people this is the chief way they clean their teeth. So that aside from being food for the stomach, cassava is really good for cleaning the teeth. A man is sick; the family has medicine to give him, but it must be prepared with fresh meat. The man has no appetite and does not wish to eat, but aside from the food he is told that medicine is prepared with it, yet he hesitates. But he is all right when he hears some one say, "You wash your mouth with cassava and it is good for the stomach."

(67)

"When an old lady goes to market the second time the first time she had good luck." A Vai man made a rice farm last year and he had bad luck, so this year he is making none. A friend who did not know of his bad luck but knew of the making of the rice farm is passing one day and inquires why a rice farm is not being made this year, and he is told, "When an old lady goes to market the second time the first time she had good luck."

(68)

"When one man has his stomach full it cannot satisfy every man." A rich man has a poor friend who works for his livelihood, and all the time the rich man either sends for him or he calls to have a stroll with him. But the poor man can ill afford to spend so much time in idleness, and so he begins to decline the invitations of his

rich friend. The rich man, noticing the change, inquires, "What is the trouble?" Thereupon, the poor man answers, "You are rich, but I am a poor man. When one man has his stomach full it cannot satisfy every man. I must work for my living."

(69)

"Soon in the morning one man cannot go to two places." War breaks out between two tribes and one of the tribes has set a specific day for an attack upon a town. It turns out that this day is market-day. One of the men who is expected to accompany the attack remembers that it is market-day and informs those who are going to war that he intends to get his market and then join them for the campaign. The war people are not inclined to favor going to market before starting for the attack, and they object because it might delay the march and cause them defeat. The wisdom of the situation is found in the old words, "Soon in the morning one man cannot go to two places."

(70)

"The cow is larger than the horse, but the horse is more useful." The Vai singers are serenading the town.

They visit a man who was born a slave but who is now rich, and he gives them ten dollars. Next they play and sing for a young man who gives twenty-five dollars. The singers are surprised to receive from this young man more than from the rich man, and comments are exchanged among the strangers. The young man is a free-born Vai, a member of an old family of freemen, and takes great pride in his family history. The strangers will no longer be surprised when they hear him say, "The

cow is larger than the horse, but the horse is more useful."

(71)

"If you run you crack your foot; they do not go together." The Vai man begins to plant his rice farm and he is hurrying so that he can cut palm-nuts; and he expects to hurry with the palm-nuts so that he can go to trade. Some of his friends pass and wonder why this man is rushing so, and finally they inquire. As he relates his plans of getting rich in a short time somebody is sure to punctuate the story with this, "If you run you crack your foot; they do not go together."

(72)

"A man who has not seen the new moon before calls the stars the moon." A man is very poor and he has had to work hard for his living. But he has a stroke of sudden fortune, and is able to secure a little money, about fifty dollars, more than he ever had before in his life. He is so elated that he goes about boasting of his wealth and trying to put on airs. The rich people of the community who have been rich for generations feel a sense of disgust at the words and actions of this new lord of wealth, and they repeat among themselves the wisdom of the fathers, "A man who has never seen the new moon calls the stars the moon."

(73)

"A man can leave his house, but he cannot leave his way." A bad man has had so much trouble in one town that he has decided to move to another town far away where he is not known. When he arrives at the town he

finds that his reputation for trouble has preceded him, and he hears with much surprise and regret what the people say; so he really decides to act well and to show that he has been maligned and misrepresented. He does very well for a time, but finally falls into his old habits, and the people begin to say, "A man can leave his house, but he cannot leave his way."

(74)

"The house looks pretty from the outside, but the inside is bad." The Vais like to dress, and some of the worst characters of the community appear in the finest and most costly dress. On ceremonial occasions some of these bad people appear so well that they excite the comment, "The house looks pretty from the outside, but the inside is bad."

(75)

"Old cloth has a new pocket." That is, a poor man suddenly gets a little money or is raised to position.

(76)

"The people are sorry for the man who plays the organ at night." That is, a man poor, with no wife nor other persons in his house, usually plays some kind of music at night when other people have gone to bed.

(77)

"A sassy woman puts chicken on the grave of her husband's friend." That is an expression that is used when some woman neglects her husband's grave.

(78)

"Noise of the horn is not news like the fire of the

gun." When a stranger, asked for news and knowing none, begins to say that the people are making a farm, this answer is often given to him, "Noise of the horn is not news like the fire of the gun."

(79)

"The piles always catch the thin, weak man." When people want to pass through certain tribes at war and they are warned not to pass that way, they reply, "The piles always catch the thin, weak man."

(80)

"Man does not leave his well in rain time." New people come, and when one is about to leave old friends for the strangers the warning is, "Man does not leave his well in rain time,"—that is, when he has plenty of water.

(81)

"The rice bird finds a place to sit down first before he begins to eat rice." That is to say, before a person undertakes to do anything he should first get some power or make preparations.

(82)

"The little billy-goat never cries for horns." That is to say, a rich man's son never hurries like a poor boy to get money.

(83)

"You must hold the bamboo stick until you reach the country where you can get a reed." That is, sometimes you may have a bad boy, woman, or man, but you must hold him until you get a good one.

(84)

"Don't do me like the pestle that beats the flour." That is, a person claims something that belongs to a big man, but he never gets it. The pestle is white, but it has beaten no flour. So the big man says, "Don't do me like the pestle that beats the flour."

(85)

"The chicken cries for teeth, but he has not any." That is, when a man is promised to be made king he makes promises as to what he will do. In case he is disappointed and complains, the answer is made to him, "The chicken cries for teeth, but he has not any."

(86)

"Man walks through the bush by the word of a big monkey." That is, when a stranger asks in a town for some one to carry him to some king or place and they do not wish to do so or have no one to send they often say, "Man walks through the bush by the word of a big monkey."

(87)

"The elephant never gets tired of carrying his tusks." That is, no matter how poor people become they try to support their people, and if they complain the above words are echoed in their ears. If they complain when they are doing any other thing they ought to do they hear the words, "The elephant never gets tired of carrying his tusks."

(88)

"There is no sore as big as the head cut off." When

one man has done a great crime and some one complains of some smaller offense they are reminded that "There is no sore as big as the head cut off."

(89)

"The person who says catch a cat by the neck has been bitten before." When a person is about to stand somebody's bond and some one warns him not to do so and he wants to know why not, the answer is, "The person who says catch a cat by the neck has been bitten before."

(90)

"If the rain does not come the orange will still have water." When a person has become rich and refuses a favor and is told that certain trade will be withdrawn he replies, "If the rain does not come the orange will still have water."

(91)

"When you reach the head of the water the fish has finished." When a man owes many debts and all his property has been taken from him, and when some one says he will sue him again he is told, "When you reach the head of the water the fish has finished."

(92)

"If you put flour in two hands it will be dirty." When a person sends something to another person and gives it to a man to carry and he gives it to another, and he to another, and so on, when it reaches the person to whom it was sent some of it is sure to be lost. Therefore if any person proposes to transmit in this way he is told, "If you put flour in two hands it will be dirty."

(93)

"The fish likes water pass everybody." That is, when the king does some wrong and one of his own men or kinsmen admits it the opposers of the king say it is true because "Everybody likes water, but the fish pass all." The one man is likened unto a fish in water, and his testimony is more convincing, as the fish likes water beyond other people.

(94)

"The goat is not big in cowntown." When a man leaves his home and is unknown in a place, and especially when he is a big man at home and is not given the attention abroad that he feels he ought to have, he often says by way of consolation, "The goat is not big in cowntown."

(95)

"If the people say they will to-morrow kill the liar he cannot sleep." When a crime is committed and a day is set for finding out who did it and some persons flee before the time, the people use their parable, "If the people say they will kill to-morrow the liar he cannot sleep."

(96)

"Water does not clean a person's skin." When a man loses a case because he has not money to defend his rights and when people refer to him as being in the wrong as the reason why he lost the case, he answers, "Water does not clean a person's skin."

(97)

"The meat for every day is goat." When a person who begs often considers too small what has been given him the donor reminds him, "The meat for every day is goat." That is, they cannot have beef and fine meat every day any more than one can make large gifts often.

(98)

"The leopard cannot catch a person with a chicken on his shoulder." That is to say, when a man has money it is difficult to do anything to him. If some one complains that a rich man's son has committed a crime and gone clear, he is reminded that, "The leopard cannot catch a person with a chicken on his shoulder."

(99)

"One man who has eaten enough food is not sufficient for other people in the town." One boy gets to bragging about the rich men in his town and the poor boy from a poor town answers, "One man who has eaten enough food is not sufficient for other people of the town."

(100)

"The little bird begins to cry before the other birds come." That is, there is a bird with eyes far back in his head and he begins to cry so as to shed tears at the same time that the other birds do. This parable is used when one man is chided for having been so long in building his house. He replies, "The little bird begins to

cry long before the other birds come," in order that he might have his house at the required time.

(101)

"People who kill an elephant do not forget the head." Two persons are friends, and one of them has something, and he gives it out to all but this friend. He comes and asks for his part, and the friend replies that he forgot him. The retort is, "People who kill an elephant do not forget the head." The head is valuable because it contains the ivories.

(102)

"The doctor-woman cannot take the baby for her pay." One person gives some things to be repaired to another who demands pay before he delivers them. He is told, "The doctor-woman cannot take the baby for her pay."

(103)

"You cannot lick your dry hand." You continue getting a man to do things for you and you fail to pay. Sometime you will ask him again to do something and he will remind you that "You cannot lick your dry hand."

(104)

"A snake has bad luck at the well." A man with a bad reputation is generally attended with trouble wherever he is known, whether he does anything or not; things that other people do are put upon him. When he is under some false accusation he often explains the in-

justice he bears by saying, "A snake has bad luck at the well."

(105)

"If you sit on the bottom of the sea, you cannot be a fish." One man comes to a strange place and talks assumingly concerning the affairs of the people. After he has resided there sometime, no matter how long, one day in discussion some one will tell him, "If you sit on the bottom of the sea, you cannot be a fish."

(106)

"It is not difficult to make a bag of a leopard hide." On important ceremonial days people dress their children. Good-looking children do not require so much dress. When the people are praising the good-looking girls some one who has spent a great deal of money in order to have an ugly girl appear well says, "It is not difficult to make a bag of a leopard hide."

(107)

"A minnow is not small to his deep." Often strange people will wonder how a small boy can be king or possess so much property, and the people answer, "A minnow is not small to his deep."

(108)

"A dried rat has blood." When a poor man gets rich or suddenly increases his fortune envy inspires many to say, "A dried rat has blood."

(109)

"You cannot tell a rock to strike where you desire."

A man has a bad son and everything he tells the son to do the son disobeys; then the people say, "You cannot tell a rock to strike where you desire."

(110)

"A man has a water-pot on his head, but he cannot drink." Often a man has slaves and they all go off to work. The master wants something done immediately; he calls some one to come and do it; they refuse. Then you can hear him muttering to himself, "A man has a water-pot on his head, but he cannot drink."

(111)

"When a man says, 'I savey sing he has his head.' " Sometimes when they have prisoners of war and the time arrives for execution some of the prisoners will claim that they will be very useful as slaves on the farm, and they will plead for their lives by telling the work they can do. Some of the captors, convinced by the pleas, repeat this parable in behalf of the pleading slaves, "When a man says, 'I savey sing he has his head.' "

(112)

"To eat raw is good for cassava." When a man brings stolen money or goods to the house of his friend they generally divide it. But if the money or goods be not stolen and the friend calls for a division, he is pretty apt to hear, "To eat raw is good for cassava."

(113)

"When you do not want to go in front or behind you have a messenger to carry you." When a man has a lazy wife who does not wish to do anything and desires

the husband to hire a servant, when the time arrives to do some work she says she cannot do it. Sometime when she is saying that she cannot cook or cannot get water the husband reminds her of the fact that she has no servants by saying to her, "When you do not want to go in front or behind you have a messenger to carry you."

(114)

"To walk with nothing is better than to have a light load on the head or shoulder." Of a group of slaves two or three will combine to steal something. When the time for punishment arrives some will ask for light punishment because they only watched or knew about the stealing. It is then that the judge reminds them of their guilt and points out the superiority of the innocent man by the adage, "To walk with nothing is better than to have a light load on the head or shoulder."

1914 Weeks Bakongo.pdf

AMONG THE PRIMITIVE BAKONGO

A RECORD OF THIRTY YEARS' CLOSE INTERCOURSE
WITH THE BAKONGO AND OTHER TRIBES OF
EQUATORIAL AFRICA, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR HABITS, CUSTOMS
& RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

BY

JOHN H. WEEKS

Correspondent to the Royal Anthropological
Institute & to the Folk-Lore Society
Author of "Among Congo Cannibals," &c. &c.

With 40 Illustrations & a Map

LIBRARY OF
THE
MUSEUM OF
COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY

LONDON
SEELEY, SERVICE & CO. LIMITED
38 GREAT RUSSELL STREET
1914

The feeling of weakness or cramp in the legs after an illness, is stated by the saying, *My legs have been nibbled*, as though a mouse had been at them; a thoughtless action which involves great loss is likened to *the wickedness of a fly* that alights for a moment on a carcase, and thus causes it to go rotten very soon—a small action leading to irreparable consequences. To shame a person is *to grind their self-respect into small pieces* so that it will not cover them; and to humiliate a person is *to weed up their pride*, and *to weed up a person's anger* is to conciliate him.

A cross-eyed person is said to have his *eyes ajar*; and the rays of light streaming from behind a dark cloud *are the legs of the sun*. *Did you ask permission to be where you are?* is a wise way of stating, “I have as much right here as you”; and one who acquires a fashion, or conforms to a new condition of things is said to have *swallowed them*, they have become so much a part of himself. When an event takes place the reason for which is hidden, the perplexed person says, *One and three, but there is something in the middle*, i.e. there is a word missing, or the cause of these actions is obscure.

Sometimes we come across puns, or a play upon words. The word for hunger (*nzala*) is the same as for finger-nails, and *They gave me a good knife to cut my nails* is used as the equivalent for, “They gave me nice food to cut (*satisfy*) my hunger.” Again, the word for horns (*mpaka*) stands also for objection, and when two bullocks, brow to brow, are shifting their horns about to get a grip and thus push one another down, the identical phrase, *To move the horns about*, is used of two men having an argument—moving their objections about to floor each other in the discussion.

The wit and wisdom of a people are often found in their proverbs—those crisp sayings expressed by one which crystallise the experience of the many. One writer calls them “the hob-nailed philosophy of the people;” and another says that “proverbs are the daughters of daily experience.” An African tribe does not lack experiences because it is savage, and it speaks well for their intellectual acuteness that we find so numerous a progeny of such “daughters” existing in the

Lower Congo language. The probability is that many "daughters" have died at birth, for until missionaries went there the people were without a written language in which to preserve the offsprings of their fancy, or record the birth of a witty or pointed aphorism.

A proverb loses much of its obviousness, and not a little of its terseness and force, by translation into another language; and when the translation is made from an African language into a European one the difficulty is somewhat increased. The environment of the black man, his point of view, his habit of thought, and his superstitions, touching as they do every part of his life, all tend to make it anything but easy to place a white man in such a position that he will at once appreciate the full flavour of some of the African proverbs. For this reason a large number of them will never be translated into any European tongue, as they would demand a long, close study of the black man's life, and a clear understanding of what is at the back of the black man's mind, to appraise their wit and philosophy. Still there are some that are translatable, as they do not demand any special knowledge on the part of an English reader to catch their purport, or understand their teaching, and the following is an attempt to put a few of them on record in an English dress.

A blustering, boastful, conceited man is wisely reminded that the *cocks that crow have only come from eggs*; and when a man of no importance, a man who thinks far more of himself than other folk think of him, gets up in a palaver and gives utterance to "tall talk" until he has bored nearly everybody, a chief pointing at him will say, *There is a little fowl trying to lay a big egg*. I have seen this proverb used with crushing effect, and it was many a day before the man ventured to speak again at a palaver. A shallow, foolish person who, although he is beaten in an argument, continues to speak for the sake of hearing himself talk, is told that he is *like an onion leaf, green and smooth outside but empty inside*; and a man who knows he is wrong but will not accept the arguments of his opponents is said to be *a sick man who refuses medicine because he feels that death is drawing near*. But when a man

is defeated in a discussion, and has nothing more to say in his own defence, he uses the expression, *You have shot me in the legs; if it had been in the head I should run away*, i.e. you have caught me this time; and when a person has no excuse to offer for a wrong done, he is said to be *like a monkey that blows out its cheeks because it has nothing to say*.

Fussy, self-important folk, who desire more consideration than their position demands, are to be found in Africa as in other parts of the world. To such people the following plain question is put: *You are a crab with only ten legs and you want to travel in a hammock, but I am a millepede with a thousand legs; in what shall I travel?* i.e. do not think so much of yourself when there are greater folk present. When a disagreeable, contentious person treats his friends badly, he is asked: *The partridge is your enemy, and the cock is your enemy; who will tell you of the approach of dawn?* The people, having neither watches nor clocks, are dependent on these and other birds for heralding the coming dawn; and the proverb means that if you make everybody an enemy who will help you in the hour of need.

The principle that men should be first and boys after, or respect for elders, is inculcated by the phrase, *The elders wear the cloth first, then the boys get the rags*. And the young folk are exhorted not to laugh at a man who slips down, literally or otherwise, by the saying, *A full-grown man may fall, for his beard is not made of props*. A dissatisfied, restless boy is told that *A silly mouse may leave its hole in anger, but that does not change it into a rat*. When a lad is travelling with a caravan, and has been on the road some days, he begins to feel the pinch of hunger, through the scantiness of daily rations, and boylike he complains of his hunger; but the elders of the party pertinently ask him, *Can you carry your house with you and leave your stomach at home?* No, one must have his stomach wherever he goes, therefore he must put up with the inconveniences of it. If a boy is punished for stealing, and he is tempted again soon after, he will reply to his tempter, *A big toad can blow four trumpets, but the first one I blew made my eyes bulge out*, i.e. a big rogue may be reckless, but a small one must think of the

consequences—you remember what a punishment I suffered for stealing, I don't want any more.

"When the cat is away the mice will play," is expressed thus: *When the leopard has left they eat his cubs*, or, *In the town that has no cat the mice play with the dogs' bells*. "He cut off his nose to spite his face" is put in this form: *He burnt his house in anger, and now he has nowhere to sleep*. And our proverb of "There is many a slip between the cup and lip" has its fellow on the Congo in the saying that *The pot that would have cooked the antelope is broken*. The lesson of impartiality is enforced thus: *If twins are born to you don't despise the other of the two*; and the impossibility of doing two things at once is shown in that *A dog has four legs yet it cannot walk in two roads*, therefore you cannot expect me with only two legs to do what a dog with four never attempts. *A load of salt on another man's head is easily carried*, expounds a truth readily acknowledged by all, that we bear lightly the burdens carried by others; and the evils of procrastination are well exemplified by the sayings, *You waited until the sun rose before you pulled your blanket over you*, and, *You set the trap after the rat had passed*, i.e. you have postponed until it is too late what you should have done earlier.

Gossiping is not encouraged, for it works as much harm there as here, consequently a person is told, *If you receive a message deliver it, but if you are only told an affair leave it where you heard it*. *He is a talker who turns the king-post round* is said of one whose word is not to be trusted, and such a one is also described as *possessing two mouths*. When a man is reminded of a wrong he has committed, and goes off in wrath, some one will call after him, *The bald-headed man leaves in anger (when told of his baldness), but will he grow any hair where he goes?* i.e. will a man's customs be changed because he leaves his friends in anger when told of some foolish or evil thing he has done?

A woman likes the meat, let her have the bones, i.e. a person who breaks the law should also bear the penalty—the one should go with the other. When a palm-nut is eaten it leaves a reddish-yellow smear of oil round the mouth, hence when a

person suffers for the wrong doings of another, the proverb runs: *The fish-eagle eats the palm-nuts but the lizard has the reddish mouth*; this refers to the Kolombo lizard, which has a reddish tinge round the mouth. *He who cleared the long grass from the road opens the way for next comers*, i.e. the one who first commits a wrong opens the way for those who come afterwards, and his action is the more worthy of condemnation. That judges should be merciful in dealing out justice is taught in the proverb, *If a leopard gives birth to a palm-rat she does not eat it*, i.e. you should have punished me for breaking your laws, but you should not have destroyed me, for I am born into your clan. When a person is convicted because he belongs to a clan other than that of which the judge happens to be a member, the folk standing round will say, *In a court of fowls the cock-roach never wins his case*, i.e. the verdict of one race or one clan concerning another is not altogether free from bias, and should be received with caution—the fowls always eat the cock-roaches when they see them.

Foolishness in all its various aspects has its own set of proverbs to ridicule and condemn it. An utterly stupid person is likened to *a blind man who puts rotten nuts in a bag full of holes and then takes a dead road*, i.e. a blind alley. What combination of ideas thrown together can more fittingly describe a gross bungler? About a man who is smitten with the appearance of a woman and pays the marriage money for her without knowing anything of her temper, or her ability as a cook or farm worker, the proverb is used, *The mouth bought the pepper, but was surprised at the burning pain*—the burning sensation that comes from eating peppers that are pretty to look at but are as hot as fire to the taste. When a man either through carelessness, deceit, or stupidity pretends, or does not know what he really should know, he is told, *The hair belongs to your head, yet you don't know when it was cut off*. Our saying that a fool learns by experience is thus stated: *The fool who wishes to be thought wise sets fire to the village grass*, and so burns down the village; and the phrase that *the head drives, the legs go*, indicates utter thoughtlessness.

Should a person be disheartened in an undertaking and

wish to abandon it because of some small difficulty he has encountered, he is asked, *If you are building a house and a nail breaks, do you stop building or change the nail?* That there is no royal road to learning is fully recognised even in Africa, as shown by the following proverb: *Wisdom is not a medicine to be swallowed.* The native huts are thatched with a special kind of grass, and everybody tries to procure it as long as possible, but sometimes, for various reasons, only short grass is to be found, and this lack of choice is used as a proverb equal in force to our English one, "Beggars must not be choosers," and it is as follows: *If you reject the short grass you will be left in the rain.* When a prominent man in a village acts ungenerously towards a little man, the latter says, *It is on a small place that one practises a new dance*, i.e. It is well for you that you tried that trick on me, for if you had treated an equal in the same way he would have retaliated.

The Congo folk are not so slow of wit as to pass unnoticed that universal trait of human nature that urges a man to humble himself in order to attain a desired end, which we often express in the phrase "He stoops to conquer," and they state it in the proverb, *To enter a calabash the frog makes itself very small*, but once inside it blows itself out so that you cannot expel it. This proverb was often used of the now defunct Congo Free State, which, in the early years of its existence, "went about the country smiling, talking suavely, and giving presents on the slightest excuse, and afterwards turned round and oppressed the people"—it got into the calabash and the people could not drive it out. The idea of substituting "a sprat for a mackerel" is embodied in the saying, *When we have drunk palm-wine you are too smart in putting the bitter nut for the kola nut.* The kola nut is rare, dear, and greatly prized as a pick-me-up after a bout of drinking, and there are other nuts just as bitter as the kola nut, but, lacking its medicinal properties, they are valueless as pick-me-ups; and anyone conferring a small benefit in hope of gaining a great advantage, or anyone trading, &c., who tries to give an inferior article in place of a better is said to be giving a bitter nut (*ngadiadia*) as a substitute for the kola nut (*makazu*).

On the Lower Congo the leopard is the king of beasts, and is always spoken of with respect as lord, chief, &c., and the saying that *When the leopard becomes poor he eats mud* depicts a strong, important man reduced in circumstances, or weakened by disease, so that the "small fry" of the town trifle with him and treat him with contempt. A man may be masterful and much feared outside his own house and family, or as a chief outside his own town, but among his kith and kin he may not be much esteemed, hence the proverb, *The leopard's cub does not respect his father's marks*. An oily face is a sign of beauty, and the native words for father's sister literally mean female-father, hence the force of the following proverb: *The toad has an oily face in the presence of his father's sister*, i.e. a person is always beautiful to his nearest relatives, and they are ever ready to excuse his faults and irregularities.

Things are not always what they seem, and appearances are somewhat misleading. The man who walks through the village in an old cloth, with skin unoiled, and body rough for lack of the camwood cosmetic, may possibly be a man of importance in the place from whence he comes, for *The garden egg possesses no clan, split it open and behold* it is full of seeds, and consequently has a large family. A state officer may be insignificant to look at, and have only a few soldiers with him, but if you touch him you discover that he has the whole of the Government's power behind him.

The above proverbs and sayings are typical of many that are still untranslated which touch on every phase of human life, thought, and experience. Of course in village life these proverbs are applied in scores of different ways only slightly indicated in the above explanations, for every proverb lends itself to a variety of applications. We trust that in the unfolding of these proverbs the readers will recognise that these uncultured, backward people of the Congo possess some keenness of intellect, a power of observation, and a felicity of expression that augur well for their future progress in civilisation.

1916 AWB Nupe.pdf

1
3115

GÀMĀGÀ NYÁ NUPE

(NUPE PROVERBS)

A. W. B.
...

354998
19. 9. 38.

THE NIGER PRESS, SHONGA, NIGERIA
1916.

GÀMǺGÀ NYÁ NUPE.

1. **A 'á gwalò dà 'gi pin, a 'á gwapìn dìn u ba :**

With the right hand they thrash a child,
and with the left draw it to them (i. e.,
be firm but loving).

2. **A de gávò mǎnîn à, 'nya nà wu u nà, u mǎ jí :**

Don't rejoice over the finding of decayed
fish, for what killed it, would have eaten
it if it had been good.

3. **A de lǔkukù 'fiá à, cìn gwapà u lě :**

You don't get a pigeon for nothing, so
look at its wings (i.e., some one did
something to the pigeon first).

4. **A ècé gùdù kácé, a mǎ ècé pátí kácé, àmâ a ècé Sòkó kácé à :**

One may go around a ravine, or around a
hill, but one cannot go around God
(i. e., there is no escape from God).

5. A èdǎ 'yà bè kǎnǎ nyi ekpà 'o le
fítí bo à :

Even though one may make friends with
a monkey, his arrow will not remain
up *in the air*. (Don't expect impos-
sibilities.)

6. A èdzǔ 'dě 'nà ko kuru à, kuru gà
ágěǎ, ke wo gà 'á ku dà kún o ?

If she wears her best clothes when making
kuru food, when it is cooked and taken
out to be sold, what will she then wear?

7. A ègǔn 'nǎ fi cigbǎn nǎ, a gún
'nǎ fi 'tú be à :

When a fire is kindled against a tree there
is no need to kindle another fire against
the parasite *on the tree* (i. e., what con-
cerns the head of the family concerns
all).

8. A èkǎ nǎwú dà à :

Smoke cannot be confined *to one place*.

9. A èkún eṣi nyíkǎnkpiñci yà ezà
'mì à :

One would not sell a toothless dog to one's

own household (i. e., do good to your own).

10. **A èlǎ emí woró pa fini à :**
Ground-nut oil cannot be wrapped in a leaf.
11. **A èlǎ eyì nùbà nù 'fá à :**
Tiger-nuts are not planted on guinea-corn land. (There is a place for everything.)
12. **A èlǎ kàngàri bìsà lo kpáta à :**
A straw cannot be driven into baked ground to be used as a stake.
13. **A èlǎ pùtaka fi 'mi o yì gǎfù à :**
One cannot say "gǎfù" with the mouth full of popcorn.
14. **A èlǎ Sòkó gǔn bè èlǒ nyi à :**
God cannot be compared to a slate with writing (i. e., compare things that are equal).
15. **A èlǎ 'yé tú yàká tsudò bòsè à :**
One *wife* does not count on using the others' pepper to make porridge (i.e., count only on that which is your own.)
16. **A èlè 'bi, dòkò u sá wǎníkó à :**
When they are sharpening a knife the horse has no fear.

17. **A èlǽ a 'mì lo nǽ, a èlǽ a nìn lo à :**
Even though you may enter the house,
you don't always enter the hearts.
18. **A èsa 'wò níní gǽ, esùn ákǽ à :**
One cannot say that the line is crooked when
only one hill has been thrown up (i.e.,
do not criticise until the work has been
completed).
19. **A èsǽ 'dzò nyǽ enyǽ bi à :**
People do not hide away the seeds of
malice. (Forgive and forget.)
20. **A ètǽ tǎnkpǽlǽ şitǽ, 'ècé u yì
ádwaní:**
When they are talking about sixty toads,
they have added seventy to the original
(i.e., always make allowance for exag-
geration).
21. **A ètǽbǽ dá n kǽrà o pa kǽrà à :**
One does not make up an extra load just
because another person says that he will
carry it for them (i.e., count only on
what you are sure of).
22. **A ètǽbǽ 'jè o lo Gudú à, àmǽ a gǽ
yǽ a bo, a nǽvǽ à :**

People do not go to Gudú just to get a meal but should they be offered one while there, they would not refuse it.

23. A ètòbó 'nyà bà gĩ o, kpịn 'nyà mǎ gí à :

One does not care to cultivate a taste for nice things, when he can have only what he begs.

24. A gà 'ǎ 'dě mǎ sụnsụnci, u gà u dzũ ásá :

If you loan a garment to a poor man, you may expect him to wear it out.

25. A gà 'ǎ mi ba yìsà, mǎdǎ 'á mi wu à :

If I am tied to a granary, I will not die of starvation (i.e., there will be no want if I am connected with a rich man).

26. A gà 'á mi pa yìsa, n dǎ yìsǎ ábǎ à :

If they bind me to the "yìsa" food, I will not allow it to sour.

27. A gǎ èkpa 'nyà nyi nyà, a à kpa

biyé du :

When one is thinking about dancing, he must also consider that his body will shake.

28. **A gá èpo şèlǔ, etí u fé nǔ kparò :**

When they roast a guinea-fowl, the partridge has a head-ache (i.e., when danger is near be careful).

29. **A gùṅ 'zìkó bè 'wùṅ nyi à :**

A great city is not taken by means of a little quarrel.

30. **Ajiṅ a cé 'kpà kîn yàbǎ ?**

When one shoots an arrow, does the ground move out of the way ?

31. **Ajiṅ a gba 'zàkó gò 'cami ?**

Do they follow a great man to receive only his blessing ? (They want something more substantial than that.)

32. **Ajiṅ a gbín èdo gà a ci fi u 'yì ? :**

Do they ask permission of the granary to put corn in it ? (Of course not, it was built for that purpose.)

33. **Ajiṅ a lá nyankpa gúbà fi 'nà tswa ?**

Do they have two irons in the fire while forging ? (One thing at a time.)

34. Ajiṇ a sì nugún yà kparò ? :

Can they make a boundary line for the partridge ?

35. Ajiṇ a tá 'gà 'mi kánsáná ? :

Can a person talk with a dry mouth?
(i.e., a person needs to be fed before he can work.)

36. Ajiṇ a wo dùkú nuwọṇ kézè ? :

Do they turn back at hearing the noise of water ? (Don't be easily discouraged.)

37. Ajiṇ a zo 'gà bédzò a ci de 'gà :

The trouble has to be settled first, then they can find out the cause.

38. A jiṇ nyína ge ebó 'sun o :

Do well to-day on account of to-morrow.

39. A kpàṇ dzákàngì dà zùnmà o, u gǽ, u pa nyikà bìcì à :

A child carried on the back cannot say that he stepped on a fish (i.e., some lies cannot be hidden).

40. **A kpe te ke sàmi èlù nuwọn nà
a ci ku 'wó dà ọ u :**
People know that a sieve leaks and yet
they go and buy it.
41. **A kpétsò Sòkó nìkìn à :**
No one who trusts in God will ever fall.
42. **A lá 'bà kekere jìye à, kágă pátí
dà bo à gùdù dà bo :**
A place without anything cannot be de-
scribed, for if there is no hill there, then
there must be a ravine (i.e., there is an
answer to every question).
43. **A lá cigbè nyá gbàkó jìn nyá 'tí à :**
They don't give stomach medicine for a
pain in the head. (Don't beat about
the bush.)
44. **A lá emi máná kún dàngi à, gămă
wun à wọn 'nya ga etsú à :**
They don't waste good words selling a cat,
for it will not catch anything more than
rats.
45. **A lá 'gà tun nusa 'yé o ványí à :**
No one accuses an old person to the face
hastily.

46. **A là gbàkó kàsà eyé dzákàn bo à :**
They don't open a crocodile's stomach
in front of children (i.e., they may
see something there that will frighten
them).
47. **A lá 'zà nana gí 'fú voda :**
They ate this man like honey in a calabash.
(That is easy.)
48. **Aleki nyá yǐgbèci yì niní, nyá 'zà
nà wún 'nya nà, u yì kpótsun :**
The sin of the thief is one, but the sins
of the owner are a thousand (i.e., by
accusing everybody of the theft).
49. **A le kpatsun dàngi yé, a ci lá
'gban dà u 'sín o :**
Make sure that you have the cat by the
neck first, then tie a string about its
body.
50. **A le yǐgbèci yé a gba bìcí iwun à :**
When they have found the thief there
will be no further need to trace his foot-
prints (i.e., when you have received
what you want stop asking).
51. **A li elúgi, ké nnà dà èsá bo à :**

In robbing a bird's nest, they do not take the young ones and leave the old (i.e., complete what you begin).

52. **A ló èdo kpàyì ke a ló nyá ekpán nà à :**

One does not enter a *kpàyì* granary in the same way that he would enter an *ekpán* one : *the kpàyì has thorns* (i.e., everything is not accomplished in the same manner).

53. **A lo latí zịn bé tsún a ma mmà; a lo latí zịn bé tsún a ma yàyǎ à :**

To go to the farm and return, and find that an uncle has been born is possible ; but to go to the farm and return, and find that an older brother has been born is impossible.

54. **Alùbǎsa wun ègò 'li nyá nuwon à :**
An onion does not take the character of water (i.e., a child is not always like its parents.)

55. **A ma 'gi dèdè a lá yà màkuṇ-duṇnu à :**

If a bad child is born, they won't give it to the hyenas.

56. **A mú cigbè lá gintara batà à :**
People don't lick medicine and forget their tongue.

57. **A nà wo 'yé fia, kába wo jìṣ yèbo à, a bé nà wo 'nyà guṣ, we a bẹ jìṣ yèbo :**

If one washes your face rubbing downward and you are not thankful, let him wash it rubbing upward and then you will appreciate it.

58. **Àsára, wuṣ gá èkà maza ka bò-lànci o :**

Misfortune is what keeps back the energetic man to make him wait for the feeble man.

59. **Aṣá! dùngùrù n de bída à :**

Oh ! my banjo has no bells on it (i.e., just because there is no outward show connected with your work don't think it is useless).

60. **Àṣiáda u kà 'fú nyi mọ à :**

To belittle honey does not hinder it from being sweet.

61. **Ásíáda u kà 'zà nyi gí à :**

Slander does not hinder a person from eating.

62. **A tú 'mì kà 'yé nà, a tú 'mì kà tukpa à :**

You may build a wall to stop people looking, but you cannot build one to stop people hearing (i.e., somethings are possible and some are impossible).

63. **A wómă gúbà gunjì bo à :**

You can't enjoy two things on a sandbank (i.e., water is close by but wood is a long way off).

64. **A wú nusa gǎ, tsùṇ gǐ à :**

They don't teach old people how to take food. (Cp. "Don't teach your grandmother. ")

65. **A yì we nnă 'bàkógi wo jìṇ gagà, biṣe nà òmă gúwo nà súṇkún ? :**

They call you the mother of twins and you are very proud, what about the hen that has ten chicken ?

66. **A yì 'zà gúbà kpàta bo à :**

They don't call for two canoemen at a ferry crossing (i.e., one will tell the other to take the canoe across).

67. **Ázìkì lá 'mì ye tú o :**

Prosperity causes the house to be rebuilt. (i.e., to enlarge it.)

68. **Bàbàgĩ u gá nyá 'nyantsǒ à :**

A dependent person never has as much, *nor is he as great*, as the one who gives.

69. **Bàde, wun gá wun má 'gà o :**

The one who does as he pleases is the one who does all the talking. (Might is right.)

70. **Bagi na de sènǎ à na, wun à tú 'jè yé à :**

A man who has not got his board-money need not expect any porridge.

71. **Bagi nana kun etí u ké :**

This man is bigger than his head (i.e., do not have too good an opinion of your self).

72. **Bákábáká lukùlukù! ejè ábǻ, eni álu :**

The porridge is sour and the sauce bitter.
(i.e., there is nothing good.)

73. **Bǻlèlè dǻlèlè ! cigbàṇ álè ta fìtí o kǻntsǻ à sṇḍà u :**

The branch that is broken and hanging is feared by the farmer (i.e., one fears danger when it is seen).

74. **Bà nà a te lánká nà, bàgá a pá tǻmù o :**

Where palm-branches are to be had there they make tinder.

75. **Banám̐ba ! guṣiagi ba kpárà à :**
The kernel of the ground-nut is not fastened to the shell.

76. **Bànkotibǻ ! nuwṇ èsé 'zìṇ à :**
Water never fills a fish trap.

77. **Bàtaci u lwò kágbočí à :**
A slippery place pays no attention to a strong man (i.e., he can slip as easily as anyone else).

78. **Bàzà tami, èrĩ wuṇ èwǻ o :**

The one who converses loudly is wanting witnesses.

79. **Bàzà tamí, wun èzũn gàmǺná à :**

One who speaks so that all can hear is not likely lying. (Do not be afraid to speak up.)

80. **Bà 'wò fà gǺ, wun à lo 'zì, èwòtsǒ gǺ wun à lo mǺ :**

The one who has borrowed a garment says that he is going on a journey, *but* the owner of the garment says that he is going also *and needs it* (i.e., if you want to be independent neither loan nor borrow).

81. **Bàbà sá bè 'lú nyí à :**

The river-bank doesn't fall away with the bird *in it*. (Some birds scoop out nests in the sandy banks of rivers.)

82. **Bàgìdì bawǒ ! evo álà, sàngbàrà à da 'mì :**

When the calabashes are broken the packing net will be laid away to one side (i.e., when the life has gone out, the body is laid away).

83. **Bérébéré gǎ, u le 'be yé, ebe ma gǎ, u le wuṅtsó yé bēdzò :**
 One with good eyesight said that he saw a monkey, the monkey said that he saw him first.
84. **Bìcì títinkó wuṅ èjìn tukpa lefi à :**
 The big toe never does the ear any harm.
85. **Bìni ènǎwùṅ nǎ, wuṅ ètuṅ 'zà à :**
 The tree bee is only buzzing it will not sting (i.e., some people make a great fuss but do not accomplish anything).
86. **Bingi, wuṅ gá ètè misuṅ bàbòkó o :**
 A small gourd will close the mouth of a large one. (i.e., a small hinderance often gets in the way of a great blessing.)
87. **Bìṣe suṅsùṅgi nyá tálàkà, wuṅ gá yì nankó ruga wuṅ o :**
 The poor man's chicken are his cattle.
 (Make the best of what you have.)
88. **Bìṣe suṅsùṅgi nyá zùnzùṅká u kpe lúgbè ye à ; nnǎ u kpe u ye :**
 Chicken hatched in the rainy season know nothing about hawks, but the mother hen does,

89. **Bise yíwó ètí? :**
Do hens crow? (i.e., do not expect impossibilities.)
90. **Bokòbolóko ! èbo bo nuwọ̀njèci à :**
Running water never gets tired.
91. **Bòlà lá 'wùṅ zẹ 'tsa :**
A weak person turns a quarrel into laughter. (i.e., he can't fight it out.)
92. **Bõnú a èdà a ci ègun wáká o :**
The way to climb a large tree is by the vine coiled around it (i.e., approach a great man through his friends).
93. **Cigbàṅ kpàrà wùṅ èbèkà 'vun à :**
The bark of a tree doesn't smell like flesh (i.e., one thing cannot substitute another).
94. **Cigbàṅ nà gá sun nàwú nà, 'á u wa, 'á u nú :**
Wood that smokes should be taken out and extinguished (i.e., remove the disagreeable person).
95. **Cigbàṅ nà gbìṅ bè 'kà nyi nà, u gá ányì, bè kà nyi gá wun ye nyi o :**

Should a tree bearing thorns fall, and sprout again ; it will bear thorns.

96. **Cigbạn nà má 'nà nà, u kó à :**

Wood that burns well will not last long (i.e., the man who over-works shortens his life).

97. **Cigbạn nà wọncín nà, u jịn han-kàli bè bàbà nyi :**

The large tree that is growing on the edge of the bank had better be careful (i.e., one standing in a dangerous place, even though he be great, needs to be very careful).

98. **Cigbè nà a le bè kókó nyi nà, kágǎ u zo 'gùṇ à, wuṇ à zo maḍa :**

Medicine that is mixed with food, even if it doesn't cure the disease, will cure hunger.

99. **Cigbè nà má nà u jịn cigbè à :**

Medicine that is sweet is not medicine (i.e., the nicest things are not always the most profitable).

100. **Cintàrà wúriági u kun dìnní nyǎ à, a ci ba u 'nyà jịn nance à :**

The goat's tail that is not long enough to switch flies, should not be cut off to make a fly-switch (i.e., if he cannot support himself he cannot support others).

101. **Ciñciñ dé ciñciñ u yì o, àmâ nà we à ciñ 'tí we nà, wuñ à gá nyá 'zà :**

Love is love, but you will love yourself more than you will love another. (Self first.)

102. **Ciñni de 'già à, ga lá 'gwa nyá 'già to u mọ :**

The cricket has no blood, so do not touch it with a bloody hand (i.e., put the blame in the proper place).

103. **Ciñni gà áfunîn, wuñ 'á níñmĩ u ketsùn gbàkó o :**

When the cricket is full it kicks itself in the stomach (i.e., over indulgence often causes one's own destruction).

104. **Ciñ n là, bè ciñ n to nyi, kící we à li o ? :**

Which do you choose, for me to knock the
pot off your head and break it, or to lift
 it down and take out what I want?
 (Of two evils choose the lesser.)

105. **Cịnwọn yì 'dzǒ à :**
 Honour is no play (i.e., it costs money
 to be great).
106. **Cịn yé n lo wun à wo 'gà zùn mǎ à :**
 The one who continues straight ahead will
 not hear what is said behind him (i.e.,
 the way to avoid trouble is to attend
 to your own affairs).
107. **Cịn 'zà nà cịn 'o nà :**
 Love those who love you (i.e., return good
 for good).
108. **Dàdà gà, wun gá yì 'ba tsa o :**
 To predict *the future* without parleying,
 is proof that it will come to pass. (i.e.,
 people do not falter in telling the truth.)
109. **Dagba gà 'ǎ 'tsùn cé, dagba gá à
 gò wun o :**
 When an elephant kicks, only an elephant
 can receive that kick.
110. **Dagba nà ègĩ 'yì nà, wun à dà kân**

bo, a wọn kânpaci à :

They will not blame the hired man if he allows an elephant to eat corn in the field.

111. **Dǎkǎgbokokí! nǎmfa u gà áte 'gbàṇ, wuṇ ázè kàrà 'tí :**

If the haversack-strap breaks, then it becomes a load to carry on the head (i.e., give timely aid).

112. **Dàngida wuṇ èfù sókùṇ à, yèkó gboró wuṇ èdà bě o :**

The tale-bearer does not leap over the wall he comes in by the main road.

113. **Dàngi dǎ 'mì bo ètá fifa, lugwa u lo kúsò u da u cịn kàṇa lě :**

The cat sits at home telling how nimble she is, let her go to the forest and watch the monkeys.

114. **Dá n kàrà lá 'tí tun 'gó :**

The one who offered to carry the load disappeared in the grass with it. (Don't trust strangers.)

115. **Dà n lo dǎ eyé 'ga, ga lo mǎ dǎ eyé 'zìtsǒ o :**

The stranger has a desire to leave, the chief of the village however, wishes him to remain (i.e., do not let a good opportunity slip).

116. **Dàwũ mà da, yi mà mà fín :**
Dàwũ is good at making *beer*, and we are good at drinking it.
117. **Dàgà fumfúruyi o, ácin a ka nyika o :**
When the fish is fresh is the time to bend it. (Train a child when it is young).
118. **Dàgà làzìn a èbici yeşí o :**
From the morning one begins to prepare for the night (i.e., do not procrastinate).
119. **Dàkùn nà èzè gara nà, bè eyé nyi wun èzè wun o :**
The small ant-hill growing into a large one, grows in the sight of everyone (i.e., do things openly).
120. **Dégi dégi ácin sòkógùnci èwò gbàtà 'ku o :**
Little by little the leper pays his debt to the grave (i.e., by losing his fingers, etc.).

121. **Dégi dégi dākùn bò yèkó o :**
Little by little the white-ant hill takes in
the road.
122. **Dégi dégi Edù zá ci bé bò yèkó o :**
Little by little the Niger rises till it over-
flows the road.
123. **Dégi dégi gùlǔ èlǒ sòkó o :**
Little by little the vulture soars up into
the sky.
124. **Děkùn gúbà a èyà dòzì şuni à :**
Two white cloths cannot colour each other.
(You cannot give what you do not
possess).
125. **Dingi mi yì o, mi à dìñ 'o gwa dà
ke 'dù :**
I am only a water course but I will lead
you to the Niger. (Small things lead to
greater.)
126. **Dìnní ègba 'pà gba, wuñ à sá
wuñ à :**
The fly is only following the leather, it
won't eat it (i.e., have no fear when
there is no need to).

127. **Dìnnĩ gba 'ka ? :**

Do flies follow charcoal (i.e., will one work for another when he is not likely to receive anything for it) ?

128. **Dìnnĩkó gǎ yìzè yì vwónyí, èdzu gǎ u yì fínyí :**

The fly says that the world is very large, the spider says it is very small. (Vwónyí is the sound the fly makes when flying at large, fínyí when caught in a web. (Circumstances alter cases.)

129. **Dìnnĩ kpákó, èfú níní :**

Two hundred flies, one bee (i.e., one brave man is better than two hundred cowards).

130. **Dìnnĩ kpe 'tsu ye à :**

A fly does not know a king.

131. **Dìnyě nuwọ̀n èdà o :**

Water runs in ditches. (There is a right way and a wrong way.)

132. **Dòkò wuṇ èwo 'kú nínmĩ wuṇ à :**

A horse does not notice how hard his hoofs press the ground (i.e., a great man is not overly concerned about small things).

133. **Dùkùn nà èlù 'dzùn nà nuwọn
yekpára súnkún ? :**

If the pot leaks with gruel in it, what will happen when clear water is poured in (i.e., if it cannot endure this simple inspection what about the final)?

134. **Dùkùn sakùn nà èjịn enya ndondò
à nà, a èlǎ u kà 'nà :**

A broken pot is of no use, but *the pieces* can be used to shield the fire (i.e., old folks can make themselves useful).

135. **Dzákàngi ègĩ 'fú bè nusa nyi:**

The child is eating honey with the old man (i.e., children think themselves to be very important).

136. **Dzákàngi gá dà bo, wuń à bẽ ázè
nusa :**

If a child lives it will become an old person (i.e., if one perseveres he will succeed).

137. **Dzákàngi gá ègũn 'nà tsustu,
nusa 'á dà bo, u lá u gà ya :**

If children are kindling the fire of death, and an old man is about, he should scatter it.

138. **Dzákàngi nyá 'bà kpákó, bè nusa
nyi nyá dànà ení, ètàkpìṇ a
gàngání u yì o :**
A child from a far-off country, and a
stay-at-home old man, can both tell
very interesting stories.
139. **Dzákàngi u gá de yìkùrù, nusa
à gba u bára :**
If a child has food an old man will become
his follower (i.e., a man will do anything
for a living).
140. **Dzákàngi u gá ègò 'gà nusa gà,
wuṇ à bẹ 'á bìcí kạ tso 'gà gǎ:**
A child that replies to an elder will get
his foot in the matter (i.e., do not
meddle in other people's matters).
141. **Dzákàngi u là 'gò 'tí à :**
A child cannot break the head of the *egò*
fish (i.e., do not expect impossibilities).
142. **Dzúrú dzúrú ebe yí mạ re o :**
The red monkey still continues to have
red young ones. (Like produces like.)
143. **Ebá dèdè gamá gạ jèbanci, wuṇ à
de nyá u gạgạ kpe:**

A useless husband is better than a spurtle,
for the wife will have him to scold.

144. **Èbi ánǔ, wo gá à ba 'nya, egwa à kùn à :**

If the knife is sharp, and you are to cut something, the arm will not shake (i.e., make preparation and the accomplishment will not be difficult).

145. **Èbi gà ága nú, wun 'á 'tswa sá :**

When the knife is too sharp it cuts the sheath.

146. **Èbigi, nàkàgi wun à sá o, àmà èbikó nàkàkó wun à sá o :**

A small knife will cut a small piece of meat, but a large knife will cut a large piece (i.e., according to the preparation so will the work be).

147. **Èbi nà nú à nà, a lá u pàmà bè tákùn nyi :**

A dull knife is rubbed against a stone.
(There is a remedy.)

148. **Èbi nú, u dìñ 'fú nínmí wun à :**

However sharp the blade may be, it never makes its own handle.

149. **Ebó kpáká mã jịn à, 'zà nà gá**
èjịn u nà, u gà álè 'mì u ba :
 To commit a great sin is not good, and the
 one who does so will lose his way
 home.
150. **Ebó zo 'yé o, u mã zo nyagbạn bo à:**
 A dispute may be ended according to the
 countenance, but still remain in the
 heart.
151. **Eci niní u nyi eci kẹmà :**
 One bad yam will spoil all the others. ("A
 little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.")
152. **Èdě bẹmvogi ásá, kàcé ádǻgwa :**
 When the dandy's clothes are torn then
 he will stop gadding about.
153. **E 'dẹ sakùn a lá dìn nẹnkó à :**
 A cow is not led with an old rag rope.
154. **Edìn ákẹ, ájịn a tsú u zùn gútwa=**
bà gúbà :
 When a stream is crooked, one will wade
 it twice seven times.
155. **Èdzõ 'wó, wun èni a nyagbạn kìn :**
 Expensive pleasure causes the heart to fall.
 (Remorse.)

56. **Èdo wu 'yì lǎ kǎntsǒ jìn 'rǐ :**
The corn-cockle destroys the corn and calls the farmer to witness (i.e., it was done openly).
57. **Efo kpátá a le kata bo à, ájìn a cé 'fo le zèmpà o :**
Not every day does one sleep in the house, sometimes on the verandah (i.e., one does not always get what he wants).
58. **E 'fo nà dzákàngì zè 'fú ya nà, a wu u lu à, efo nà u gá bé zè yekpára va nà. efo gá a wu u lu o :**
Not on the day that the child spills honey is he thrashed, but on the day that he spills water. (Punishment may be slow in coming but it is sure.)
59. **Èfú da 'ge, bìnì da mǎ :**
The bee made honey so did the tree-fly.
(Said of those who imitate.)
60. **Èfú jìn 'gbàṇ 'á gbàṇ fíṇ :**
The bee makes honey and then eats it (i.e., do not give and then expect it back again).

161. Èfù wọn 'sì à :

A fetish placed by the roadside and eaten by a dog never affects it (i.e., the dog is not superstitious).

162. Èga èkpa 'nà kpa, wun èkún wun à :

A fold only shelters the flock, it doesn't sell them (i.e., to have is not to own).

163. Ega kpe cingini 'bù à, èmitsò gà yà wun o :

The stranger did not know that the pounded yam was made from seed yams until the host informed him.

164. Ega u kun egi nà a mà ezi o nà à :

A stranger can never have the same standing as one born in the town.

165. Ega yígánci gá cín, zùngbere à ko 'ya :

When an honourable guest arrives, the ants will drag canoes (i.e., with so much food about the ants will be seen dragging the crumbs away).

66. **Egà dèdè, nyikà fù nuwọ́n bipa :**
Bad news, the fish is bathing in warm water (i.e., it is being cooked).
67. **Egà fù sókùń à, ezà 'mì lá u bẹ̀ o:**
Private conversation does not fly over walls, it is the people of the compound who tell it *outside*.
68. **E egàgà ácin a yì jinjin à :**
Talking is not doing.
69. **Ègba de gĩ à, wuń à de yà kònú à:**
If the governor has nothing to eat he cannot give to his prisoners.
70. **Egbá gúbà tá daga. gúlǔ à le mada :**
When two expert warriors join battle the vultures will go to sleep hungry (i.e., neither will kill the other).
71. **Ègba nyá Kwàlě wuń gá tun a muge nyi si o, u ci gá, "Kágá ye dà de nyá 'fin à, ye à si nyá kîn" :**
The governor of Kwàlě sent men to buy palm-wine, and said to them, " If

you are unable to get that which is up (palm wine), then you are to get that which is on the ground (beer)" (i.e., if you can't get what you want why take the nearest thing to it).

172. **Egbán gá nyá 'kín :**

Wisdom, *used while sewing*, accomplishes more than the needle (i.e., no matter how good the tools may be one must understand the work).

173. **Ègbán nàna à sá tsàká gúwo :**

This cord will outwear ten pairs of trousers.
(Extra good.)

174. **Egbè u gà ázè 'gbè dagba, 'á 'sìgi 'o wọn gǒ :**

When the hunt turns out to be an elephant hunt, call your dogs off (i.e., when the affair is too much for you, keep out of it).

175. **Egi, kpatsùn ràkùn u yì o, 'bà nà ába u nà wun à tá nyá u ló :**

A child is like a camel's neck, it goes where it pleases.

176. Egi kpòkpò wo yì o nà èwu nnà
u nà ?

So you are the mallet that strikes the log ?
(The mallet is called the child and the
log the mother.)

177. Egi nà de ndă nà, u tú kunťi à:
The child that has a father cannot do as it
pleases (i.e., we all have masters).

178. Egi nà ndă năvǒ nà, wun gá èlǒ
èdo kpàyì o :

The child that the father does not like is
the one who will go into the *kpàyì*
granary. *This grain has nettles.*

- 179 Egi Nupe ètá 'gà dìñ à, 'gà tso
u wá o :

A Nupe child does not speak Nupe incor-
rectly, *if he makes a mistake* he is in a
hurry.

180. Egi Nupe, wun à gá, gǎ, u wo
Nupe, wo gá yà u, gǎ, u to
nuwọn u fi 'mi, u bè 'nà cịn
u lě :

If a Nupe child says that he un lerstands
Nupe, then you tell him to fill his

mouth with water and blow the fire,
and see what will happen.

- 181 Egi wuṇ à gǽ, gǽ, wuṇ à ku 'wò
ndǎ u fǽ, u gǽ ágbǎ u kîn.

If a lad says that he will wear his father's
clothes, they will drag on the ground
(i.e., do not undertake what you are
unable to accomplish).

- 182 Egi yé mǽ, yági yé gò à :

Children are possible, *but* how few have
grand-children.

183. Egò dǽ nuwòṇ o, u yé 'gò nyǽ
dzǎmǽ à :

So long as the *egò* fish is in the water it
will never consent to be called the *egò*
of the juju place.

184. Egò èmǽ èvun à :

The *bass* does not hatch *suckers* (i.e., evil
cannot come out of good).

185. Egùṇ nǽ tá gorozo nǽ, u gǽgǽ à
edùṇ u gbìṇ o :

When a great man is ill he doesn't speak,
he only groans.

186. **Egwa kána u gbà u 'yé kpe à :**
The monkey's arms are not that short that he cannot cover his face. (He is able to look after himself.)
187. **Ègwa sun etí níní à :**
The fruit of the *ègwa* tree has more than one pointed end, *it has two*. (There are two sides to a story.)
188. **Ègwǎ zǎ bě, Èyì zǎ bě, nuwọn ádòkun :**
The river Ègwǎ rose, and the Èyì rose, so there was much water. (Every little helps.)
189. **Ejè ádzu, yìkùrù mà ágbà :**
The porridge is watery, and there is no more flour (i.e., two misfortunes at once.).
190. **Ejè gà ágáká kîn bo, 'nyà nà wuṇ à sà gbàkó o nà, wuṇ à bě u sà dê bo :**
If porridge remains long on the ground, it will change there to what it is like in the stomach (i.e., if you wait long enough you will see the outcome).

191. **Èká gạ Sòkó à :**
God will outlive eternity.
192. **Eká tú mǹngègi bàbò u bá yèṣí :**
When white -ants have covered over a clay
pot *to eat it*, then the calabash begins
to consider.
193. **Eká tú tákùn à :**
White-ants do not build over stones *to eat*
them (i.e., do not waste time over things
that do not profit).
194. **Eka wún kàrà o :**
The pad *placed on the head* determines the
ease of the load (i.e., conditions must
be favourable).
195. **Ekò gà ácé egi 'zìtsǒ, ega u bé
jìn a cèto :**
If the towns people are hard pressed in a
fight, then the stranger *dwelling among*
them should give them assistance.
196. **Ekò kìn wọn 'dǎ à :**
A switch-up-snare set on the ground will
never catch a bat.
197. **Ekò nyàkùn wun áfo gwa 'dǎ o :**

The shea-butter kernel in the drying kiln
is out of the reach of the bat.

198. **Ekpá gbó à, wo gǎ, èbi nú à :**

When your arm is weak you say the knife
is blunt. (cp. "Bad workmen grumble
at their tools. ")

199. **Ekpa sò, n gbà wòzè à :**

The snail when crawling does not stop at
yam hills (i.e., when you begin a task
carry it through).

200. **Ekpà wo yì o, a cé 'o, wo zín
be à ? :**

Are you an arrow that is shot out and does
not return ? (Said when a messenger is
slow in returning.)

201. **Ekun gà áwọ̀n líko, èkwà à fín
'già :**

When the battle is joined the spear will
drink blood.

202. **Ele gá dù bàtà à nyì 'gó, kágǎ
u du à, bàtà à nyì 'gó :**

If it rains the swamp will grow grass, and
if it doesn't rain the swamp will grow
grass (i.e., it will happen anyhow).

203. **Ele gá dù eká à tú 'bà, kágǻ u
dù à, wuṇ à tú 'bà :**

If it rains the white-ant will build, and if
it doesn't rain it will build. (Keep
busy.)

204. **Ele, gwǻzùṇmà nyá tsutsu u yì o :**
Sleep is the younger brother of death.

205. **Elekó gò mǻrùfa à :**
A straw hat is no shelter in a heavy rain.

206. **Ele wu mi, tòtò gǻ wuṇ à wu mi
be :**

The rain drenched me, and then the drop-
pings *from the trees* said they would
drench me again (i.e., when a man has
fallen all try to keep him down).

207. **Elúkó ló 'gba, elúgǻ ábici :**
When a big bird lights in a tree, the little
ones leave.

208. **Elú kukù u lá tsùkùṇ à :**
An old bird never carries a stick.

209. **Elú nǻ èyì ele nǻ, ele à wu u :**
The bird that calls the rain will get wet it-
self. (Those who make trouble won't
escape it.)

210. **Elú nà gǎ wuṇ à gǐ zùngbéré nà,
bè yědín nyi wuṇ à nàkɪṇ o :**

The bird that says it will eat driver-ants will leave in a hurry. (Driver-ants bite the bird's throat and sometimes kill it.)

211. **Elú tsubú kárà tsubú, egàtsò átsu, egà ákpatiatia bambè egà swàfà nyi, swàfà gà átsu, egà ásale :**

When a person dies *owing money* there is trouble adjusting his estate ; but when a child in pawn dies the affair awakens, *another child will have to be supplied as security* (i.e., some matters are more difficult than others).

212. **Eli kîn ba u jɪṇ nyagbàṇ kîn ba à :**

To act humble doesn't mean that the heart is humble. (cp. " Actions speak louder than words. ")

213. **Emagi gá ágǐ wuṇ à tá yà tu-kpa :**

When a mosquito is going to bite it will tell the ear *by buzzing* (i.e., make known your plans to someone).

214. Èmà lá 'yé, nàmpà lá zùnmà:
A serval-cat in front and a leopard behind.
(cp. " Between two fires. ")
215. Emìtsǒ gún 'nà à, ega à po 'ci à:
If the host has not made a fire, the
guest will be unable to roast yams (i.e.,
do not be forward).
216. Èmì nyá sunsùnçi, ácingă kútí
èšìwù o :
The juju man waits a long time for money
at the poor man's house (i.e., one can-
not give what he does not pössess).
217. Emitúmodù, dàngi wọn dídià:
The cat has caught a parrot. (Has more
than it bargained for.)
218. Èmǔ ádzǔ, nyankpa mà ádzǔ, ka
u fé dókòdzà, u gà á gwa dà
nuwọn yèkò o :
The tongs are red hot and the iron is red
hot, even if it were the head blacksmith
he would put his hands in cold water
(i.e., everything about the task is
trying).
219. Enà 'á le etsugíci yé wun átsana:

When fire sees a king it burns fiercer (i.e., two great warriors cannot agree).

220. **Enà de òkùn 'á kàyé u ci gá
wun à sunwun bè nuwon nyi.**

Because the fire had a pot to help it, therefore it said it would quarrel with the water, *and boiled it dry*. (Don't take an unequal advantage.)

221. **Enà u gà kun 'yi gí, wun ákun
'tun ta :**

When the goat is old enough to eat corn, it is old enough to be hit with the pestle.

222. **Enà gboró nà átà wúriàbia wun
ègbínká yèkó 'mì à :**

The driver-ants never lose the road on the way home.

223. **Enà kalú dzúdzú wun èdìn kúsò à:**

The *kalú* bird may be ever so red but it will never set fire to the forest.

224. **Enà pà 'tí u ló 'ga à :**

If a goat swings its head it will be unable to enter its house.

225. **Enùgi nà kani 'gbà nà, wànkò gá-
ní yi gà lo :**

The small vine that twists about the tree
will grow up with it.

226. **Enya dzúró wuṇ èlǻ zùba à, àmá
wuṇ èjīṇ asike :**

Red dye does not rub off *on another garment* but it reflects on it. (Influence is felt.)

227. **Enya ènyǻ 'zà, wuṇ à lõ guṣe nyá
ewa à :**

If a person is being chased he will not
enter a snake's hole.

228. **Enya 'fīṇ u gbàgbà à :**

That which is high up in the air is by no
means small.

229. **Enya gà áze 'yè, eyé gà áya nu-
wōṇ :**

If anything strikes the nose the eyes will
run water. (Sympathy.)

230. **Enya ma 'nyà, dìṇnǻkó ma kpīṇ-
kpīṇi :**

Badness bears badness, and horse flies bear
larva. (Two evils.)

231. **Enya na ezà nyá u tso wuṇ à na**

“Enyì gàfù” u la wuṇ o :

When trying to overtake a thing and failing, one will say “Oh its a hairy thing anyhow.” (Sour grapes.)

232. Enya ndondò tí ke enyà nà à :

Nothing makes so much noise as a drum.

233. Enya 'o gà ázo 'nà 'bà o, 'á 'yé lă bo :

When you have nothing more on the hearth take your eyes away.

234. Epà nà a da Èdù o nà, u ci da à nà, a lá u da sàngi ? :

If the hide taken to the Niger river, cannot be softened there, are they likely to take it to a stream (i.e., if a great man cannot help you can a poor man)?

235. Èpò lá 'yé sà 'kpán, wuṇ à wa 'tí ke èkpán nà à :

Even though the èpò grass resembles guinea corn, it cannot bear a head like it (i.e., there is a difference between the genuine and the imitation.

236. Èrĩ tú dòkò, 'gàtsò èdà gugwa :
The witness rode *away on* a horse and the
complainant *returned* empty handed.
237. Esa jìka ágbĩn a gǎ dàngi lá wun à :
If a bag of salt is missing they will never
accuse a cat.
238. Eṣi ba 'vun lá nyankpa à :
A dog fond of flesh will not carry off a
piece of iron by mistake.
239. Eṣi gá èyèna nyàkùn, èmì èba u
nyi zín :
When the dog comes to warm itself by the
kiln, it is anxious to return home again
(i.e., it can be easily seen when one is
penitent).
240. Eṣigi na ènǎwun na, wun à ko
'zà nyíkà kpwò à :
The dog that growls will not bite many
people.
241. Eṣigi na gòmi 'gbè na, wun gá a
lá gírì dà o :
The dog that is a good hunter, is the one
that will wear the collar.

242. **Eṣì nînfuci bè eṣì maḍagùṅci nyi.
èzà a à mǎ à :**

The conversation between the hungry dog and the satisfied one, will not be very pleasant (i.e., the rich and the poor cannot associate).

243. **Etià buriàtià, kara gbódzú lá
zùnmà jìṇ 'yé :**

The crab is wise he has made the back the front ; it can walk either backward or forward. (Make use of every thing.)

244. **Etià buriàtià, kpaṇmi gà ákukù
u ké da gbòkò dà ye dzwa be :**

When okra becomes old the sap goes to the roots and it sprouts again. (Try and try again.)

245. **Etí gà áṣé, kàrà 'fiṇ o :**

When the hair is long, the job belongs to the razor (i.e., everything has its use.)

246. **Etí gíkiṇni à, kòrò à nyi nu-
wọṇ à :**

If the head is not erect the throat cannot swallow water (i.e., it cannot be done that way).

247. Etí nà dá 'gĩa nà, wun à dǎjin
be à :

A great warrior will not come and prostrate himself *before common people*.
(Honour to whom honour is due.)

248. Etí u ló etítsǒ à :

The head is never too heavy for its owner.

249. Etí 'wùntsǒ a le kókó yé o :

You will see a lump on the head of the man who began the trouble.

250. Etó nà ezà leyé nà, u tun u 'yé
bo à :

When one sees the sword-grass he will not allow it to pierce his eye. (Be on the alert.)

251. E toto dǎngi à, enya nà èwọn
bise nà dókun :

There are many things that catch chicken besides cats. (Don't accuse hastily.)

252. Etun, wun gá ẹlǎ ezà wǎngi gá
gwa o :

It is work that puts one man a head of another.

253. **Etsú kpákó dàngi niní :**
Two hundred rats *don't equal* one cat.
(Cp. " One bee is better than a hand-
ful of flies. ")
254. **Etsu lá 'gbè, yě̀lè mà lá :**
The king beld a working assembly, so also
did his father-in-law. (Often one is in
a delemma not knowing whom to please.)
255. **Etsu tá gwa u kà à :**
When a king stretches forth his arm it is
not bent, (Say what you mean.)
256. **Etun ègba dìnní eyé 'tunṣò bo à :**
Work will never go slowly so long as the
owner is about (i.e., if you expect the
work to be done keep your eye upon
it).
257. **Etun gǽ, u sunḍà kágbóci à, bò-
làn-ci tsá wun èsunḍà o :**
Work says that it is not afraid of the
strong man it is the weak man that it
fears. (Cp. The hare and the tortoise.)
258. **Evo alá òkùn èmǽtsà, òkùn gǽ
alà evo mǽtsà :**

When the calabash breaks the pot laughs,
and when the pot breaks the calabash
laughs. (Tit for tat.)

259. Ewa gǻ u kpe binákún ye, tsù-
kún kpe gǻ u :

The snake says that it can do a mean trick
(*harm*) but a stick can do more.

260. Ewó dá 'gǻ ke nuwọn dá 'gun
nǻ :

Money softens a dispute as water softens
clay.

261. Ewó 'gò u kun nyá 'sin à :

The price of the *egò* fish is not as much as
that of the *esin* fish (i.e., all things
are not equal).

262. Ewó kpákó wọn sèlǻ gǻ 'te :

Two hundred cowries will catch more
guinea fowls than bird-lime. (Money
is power.)

263. Ewó mà yì nyàdǻ, gbàtàwò yì
kàsà :

One comes to borrow money like a turtle
with his head on the ground, but pays

it back like a crocodile *with his head in the air*.

264. **Ewó mà yì 'zà, gbàtàwò yì 'wùṇ :**
Borrowing money is peace, but the paying back again is trouble.

265. **Èwò nà giama leyé nà wuṇ gá wuṇ èsà o, wuṇ èsà èwò kon-dò à :**

The colour of the garment that the chameleon sees is what it imitates ; it can't imitate the garments in a hamper.

266. **Ewó yì kara o :**
Money is the witness (i.e., money decides the question).

267. **Ewó wu 'zà gá tsùkùṇ :**
Money kills more men than a club.

268. **Ewú nà a ètí èmì ẹkpátá nyá ẹzì o nà, gbărúfù 'zì a gbàyě o :**
The challenge of the enemy made outside the city wall shows that the young men of the town are despised, *for the enemy has approached even to the gates* (i.e., to press one to his face is to de-

pise him).

269. **Eya da à, bìcì mǻ dà à:**

It is too shallow for a canoe, and too deep to wade.

270. **Eya gbà eyapáci à:**

A canoe is never too small to carry the canoeman (i.e., a gift is never too small).

271. **Èyà gúbà nǻ ge nǻ, wuṇ gǻ èmǻ gbǻ sókùṇ bè dòzì nyí o:**

Only two good friends would loan one another two thousand coweries over a fence (i.e., do not expect favours from strangers).

272. **Èyà lá n kún, èyà lá n sǻ, wo gǻ, we à dǻ 'yà be à, ke we à jìn nǻ sǻ wo nǻ o?:**

A friend sold you and another friend redeemed you, should you then say that you will never make any more friends; what about the one who redeemed you? (Take the good with the bad.)

273. **Èyà mi gǻ águṇ yìlà, mi à gǻ yìlà tsùn à:**

If my friend climbs a *yilà* tree I will not eat green *yilà* fruit (i.e., a friend can get you what you want.)

274. Èyà we mà 'kòcé we èmǻnìn, wo tswá 'fo nà èkò u à bǽ gún bè wòtsó nyi nà :

Your friend is a good fighter and you are glad, but guard against the day that he may fight against you.

275. Èyà yǐgbèci, yǐgbèci u yì o :
The friend of a thief is a thief.

276. Eyé áli 'gà, wun ázè nǻbǻbàngì :
The witch of night becomes a fire-fly in the morning (i.e., at night it takes very little to frighten some people).

277. Eyé ásí yìzè áde kperè :
When the sky is black the world has a cover over it.

278. Eyé dín 'tswa u cé làzìn à :
The *new* moon is never in such a hurry that it appears in the morning (i.e., take your time). The new moon is

only visible for an hour or so after sunset.

279. **Eyé leyé wuṇ à lă wuṇ à :**

The eye sees but cannot take away.

280. **Eyé n dana bè nyá 'o nyi :**

Face to face.

281. **Eyé u leyé, u ge ga wuwo :**

To see is better than to hear.

282. **Eyi áďă, èbo áďă, ndăkó gbòyă
n gă nyá u átsana :**

The sun has set, tiredness has gone, and the juju-man says that he is now getting warmed up to it. (There is a time for everything.)

283. **Eyi wàrà gá pin 'dò, nínmĩ u yì
tsátsáyí :**

If a grain of corn falls in to the mud, the inside is still white.

284. **Ezà áďà u kpe à, wuṇ à gũṇ eya
gútá ci bé kpe :**

When a man becomes poor he does not realize it, and it will take three years for him to find it out.

285. Ezà à dǎ bè 'zàkó nyi, wuṇ à de 'nya 'zàkó :

The person attached to a wealthy man will always be receiving from him (i. e. the lesser depends upon the greater).

286. Ezà áde tsùkùṇ, eṣì ko u nyí-kà à :

The man who carries a stick will not be bitten by a dog. (Be prepared.)

287. Ezà ágbǎṇ u tá à :

A wise person will not talk about *his wisdom*.

288. Ezà à lele ké 'o, wuṇ à sǎle ké 'o :

If a person retires before you, he will awaken before you (i.e., if you would finish early, begin early).

289. Ezà gá le 'zì níní bè sòkógùṇci nyi, wuṇ à lǎ gwa tsùṇ kò :

For one living in a leper-town, it is better to close the fists *so as to appear to have no fingers*. (Do as others do.)

290. Ezà gá le 'zì níní bè sòkógùṇci-

nyi, wuṇ à sùn 'na vùn nín-
mĩ u, ebó u de 'bà u fé ke u
na :

A person living in a leper-town had better scorch himself with fire that he may appear like the lepers. (Same as above.)

291. **Eyé ásí wùrù ádőkun :**

When the sky is black there is plenty of shade. (When trouble comes it doesn't come single-handed.)

292. **Ezà átsoba òkùn, wuṇ à ẹ̀zùn gwakpa :**

If one gets too close to a pot he will get pot black on him. (Keep away from evil.)

293. **Ezà áwũkpá dàgà 'zì bàbo a le u yé ẹ̀zì ndoci bo à ; suna u tsá à lo bo.**

A person is never so tall that he can be seen from one town to another, it is his name that will reach there.

294. **Ezà ẹ̀tá gǽ, wasa u má, wuṇ à lá 'gwa dà ẹ̀mì 'wa bo à :**

Even though a man may boast that his

antidote for a snake bite is the best, he will not put his hand in a snake's hole *to prove it*.

295. Ezà fé dòkò 'tí o, u mà gwa bi-
şe à :

A man on horseback cannot show the height of a fowl.

296. Ezà gà áná 'zà vǒ, u gá ètsú
nuwọ́n bẹ́, u gǎ, wuń èla rǔn-
gbǎ kpe u :

One who hates another would say, if that one were wading in water towards him, that he was raising a dust on him (i.e., some people will find an excuse to make trouble).

297. Ezà gá ègà, gǎ, u dà mǎngè o
cín gòga, wo gǎ, kícitsǒ wo dà
o, gámǎ mǎngè dà bo tò nyá
bàkómbàgi :

If one tells you that he has got into a pot and descended into a well, then ask him which pot it was, for there are many sizes, some like bottles (i.e., allow for exaggeration).

298. Ezà gá gǻ, gǻ, Ke ké mi gí lě à
nyagbǻnnyì gò u bě o :

When a person says, "what is there that I have never eaten", envy caused him to say it.

299. Ezà gba mǻfwòci gǻ, u de 'nya
à, u gǻ wuṇ à dà gba ndǻcé ? :

If the follower of a butcher complains of not having enough meat, is it likely that he would follow a hunter ? (Be satisfied with what you have.)

300. Ezà lá tsu à, a gí u 'gún ? :

Do they divide a man's goods before he is dead ?

301. Ezà 'mì mi wuṇ à de 'kuṇ mi
à sá wǻnǻkó à, gǻmǻ u gǻ
ágún mi à :

If the people of my town are at war, I will not fear, for they will not fight against me (i.e., there is safety in friends).

302. Ezà nǻ ágǻ yěká nǻ. u yé dìn
dǻ evo 'bò à :

A very shewd person cannot be caught and put in a calabash.

303. **Ezà nà a wá nà ebà pìn wuṇ à :**
There is always room for one who is wanted.

304. **Ezà nà de emí à nà, wuṇ gá èpo 'bò o :**
The one who has no oil heats the oil cruise *to get all out.* (Necessity.)

305. **Ezà nà de èyà eya bàci à nà, wuṇ à de nyá eya ǻnà à :**
The man who had no friend last year, will not have one this year either (i.e., suspicion remains).

306. **Ezà nà de 'wó à nà, wuṇ gá èwǻ gǻḍa o :**
The one who has no money wants the article divided. (Poverty cannot be hidden.)

307. **Ezà nà etí ètá nà, wuṇ gá èwǻ 'ka o :**
The one with a sore head is the one who wants a pad *for carrying a load* (i.e. it is the sick man who wants medicine).

308. Ezà nà èwǎ yìzè nà wuṇ à dzǒ-
dzǒ à, ezà nà èwǎ èku nà wuṇ
à dzǒdzǒ à :

The man who wants to gain this world
won't play, and the one who wants to
gain the next world won't play either.

309. Ezà nà èwǎ 'zà kǎmǎ u leyé nà
u lo dzukóda :

If one wants to see a crowd let him go to
the market place (i.e., look for a thing
in the proper place).

310. Ezà nà èwǎ 'zà nà, wuṇ à de
gùṇci 'á ya à :

When one wants followers he will not
turn away even an invalid (i.e, take
what you can get).

311. Ezà nana 'á mi wa 'kà :

This person singled me out as a tally nut.

312. Ezà nà nínmǐ u 'tìṇ kpógaṇ à :
One does not cry when washing his own
wound.

313. Ezà nà tú 'do nà, u gǎ, etí u sǎ
à, 'zà nà sìyè cìṇ u lě nà, u gǎ,
etí u ása ? :

If the one building the granary does not say that he is afraid *in case he should fall*, is the person on the ground likely to say that he is? (Do not worry over that which does not concern you.)

314. **Èzà nyá kpàkota, u dà bě kpàn-gwagi o :**

The conversation behind the door has come to the front of the house. (Everything will out.)

315. **Ezà sa 'wò niní a gǽ, "Wuṇ ákà"; u gǽ wuṇ à sa bàci be à? :**

After throwing up a furrow and they say "It is not in line," is it right for a person to say that he will not throw up another? (Perseverance brings success.)

316. **Ezà típaci u womǽ yìzè à :**

A timid person does not enjoy the world.

317. **Ezà yígánci u lo kpàta u cìṇ 'ya bo à :**

A respected man will never go to the ferry-crossing and not get a boat across. (Do good and you will receive good.)

318. **Ezà 'zà kàmà wuṇ ètsu dà yigí-
dí bo à :**

A man with a large following, when he dies, will not be left in the sun (i.e. do good during life and in death you will not be forgotten).

319. **Ezì nà a kpe 'zà ye à nà, tsùkùn-
gwasuṇ gāmá gā u :**

A walking stick is a bet or recommendation in a town than a messenger who is not known.

320. **Ezì nà gǎ, wuṇ à wǔṇ 'tsu à nà,
gùlǔ à le 'zì gá o :**

The town that says that it will not obey the king will have vultures living there. (The breaking of the law means death.)

321. **Ezì nà we à lǎ 'wó lo nà, ewó
gá wún síri wuṇ o :**

If you are to take money to another city, the securing of the money decides the time of your departare.

322. **Fini gǎ, wuṇ à nyanya nyá 'fè
à, u de èdza nyá 'gwa u ? :**

The leaf said that it would not dance to

the wind, has it got a drummer of its own ? (Make the best of what you have.)

323. 'Fo nà ezà fà 'wò wǎngi nà, wuṇ à gũṇ yě̀lè u 'fo gá à :

The day on which a man wears his best clothes he won't meet his father-in-law.

324. Gagagúgù, yǐgbèci zana wuṇ ácé 'wò 'gwa :

The thief that steals a fence mat cannot hide it up his sleeve.

325. Ga jìṇ mà, wuṇ gá yì cigbè ga kpe mà :

"Don't do it," is the best remedy for,
"Let it not be known."

326. Ga jìṇ siáka bè dagba nàkà nyi mà, mǔsàri o :

Don't question the ceremonial cleanness of elephant meat ; for it is impossible to bleed one.

327. Ga kún esì nyíkàṇkpiṇci yà mi mà :

Don't sell me a toothless dog. (Deal honestly.)

328. **Ga lwò ège nyá bagi ma, bagi dé u de 'wó :**

Don't consider the goodness of a man just let the man have money.

329. **GàmǺná ázè 'già nàkà u :**

Lying has become as blood to his body (i.e., part of his nature).

330. **GàmǺná tá ga 'tìn :**

A lie hurts more than a sore.

331. **GàmǺná wun èsà a ròbò à :**

A lie does not cause a person's throat to swell.

332. **Gànda núhún, egà nyá nín u ga nyá dê :**

What has not been said is more than what has been said (i.e., you have not heard all).

333. **Gàṣikiya li 'gwa ga 'kò :**

Truth keeps the hands cleaner than soap.

334. **Gbàkó nusa bo a tun nyasá o :**

Into the hearts of old people they tip

rubbish (i.e., old people are compelled to listen to reports both good and evil).

335. **Gbangba álàkítì, eyé 'gunṣò egun èfé ci èzè dàkùn o :**

The builder's clay becomes an ant-hill before his eyes *because it dries up* (i.e., it happened before his eyes).

336. **Gbín a gà dǒkun, we a wo 'gà dǒkun :**

Make many enquiries if you would learn much.

337. **Gbínagàwǒgi, yégi zè a gà pá**

The one who is always asking questions is a brother to the one who answers saucily (i.e., both are a nuisance).

338. **Gbínagà wǒ u gbínká à, àmǎ zùn-mà u tsá ásó à :**

One who always asks the way won't go astray, but he cannot hide where he is going.

339. **Gbínghiannia u gà ákun esì, u gà 'ǎ 'sì wu :**

If enough ticks get on a dog they will kill it (i.e., don't overwork a person).

340. **Gbín gbíànniákú fokútsalé ! cìkà lá 'yé mà tsutsu, ebó u de 'bà u kpe bǒdáci ye :**

He pretended to be dead that he might know who were his friends. (Slyness.)

341. **Gbòngbò cegídí ! ewó wu 'zà gà tsùkùn :**

Money kills more people than a club.

342. **Gìamà gà ànikín, zùnyě ásun Sò-kó :**

When a chameleon falls, God has been put to shame. (The chameleon is so very cautious.)

343. **Gí n ci tsu, wun ègbíngà kútí à :**

A fetish could not prevent a hungry person eating though to eat meant death.

344. **Gintara bè nyíkà nyi, a ècé 'fo sunwùn :**

Even the tongue and the teeth quarrel now and then. (The best of friends fall out.)

345. **Gò gí u de o, u de gò jìn à :**

“ Take and eat this ” she is always saying but they never say to her, take this and make food ” (said of one who is always giving).

346. **Gòrò gà àgàká nuwọ́n, kágǻ u zín
bè nyiká nyi à, wuń à zín bè
nyasá nyi :**

When a hook is a long time in the water, if it does't bring up a fish it will bring up weeds.

347. **Gò sụngwa, u yì gò gǻ à :**

Take and hold it does not mean take and eat it.

348. **Gò ye kùń, wuń èlugwa cènkafa
de kpára à :**

Is is by beating the rice again and again that the husks are removed.

349. **Gùńci de yipa à, wuń à nà yèkò
vǻ à :**

If a sick person cannot get hot water he will not refuse cold. (Beggars cannot be choosers.)

350. **Gùńci le ekún yé ègògá, u ci jín
yèbo Sòkó :**

A sick man saw a corpse going by and he thanked God *he was still alive*.

351. **Guṣe vunla mākunḍunnu, wun à dā bo, u yì bè dāsun nyi, u dā bo à, u yì bè dāsun nyi.**

A hyena's cave is to be feared whether he is in it or not.

352. **Jèbanci gbóká 'á dùkùn là, dùkùn gò u 'mi 'á po 'nà :**

The spurtle got strong and pierced the pot, the pot took hold of it and put it in the fire. (Out of the frying-pan into the fire.)

353. **Kágă a dabó à, a gá u ? :**

If there is no complaint, will there be a settlement ? (There must be a reason.)

354. **Kágă èdě we zo kókóta à, vùdùn-nù wun à zo 'già à :**

Unless your clothes are free from lice your finger nails will not be free from blood.

355. **Kágă efà bá à, wun à gāmá gā jèkùn :**

Even if the *efà* food is not sour, *which*

is the way they like it, it is better than leavings.

356. **Kágǽ egi tígí à, a lá u ? :**

If the child doesn't cry will it be carried ?
(What is worth receiving is worth asking for.)

357. **Kágǽ enyà ta nuwọ̀n bo à, zùṅ-
gbere à lo 'kpàṅ à :**

Unless there is something on the water
the ants won't cross over (i.e., there is
a reason for everything).

358. **Kágǽ Sòkó lá céndzú wu à, wuṅ
à bẹ́ ázẹ̀ yìkuṅnu dzúrú :**

If God does not destroy the green palm
kernel, it will become a ripe one.

359. **Kágǽ tàṅkpóló ko a nyíkà à, a
gà lǎ u dà tsàkà 'á dzǔ à :**

Even though a toad doesn't bite, it is not
likely that one will put it in his trousers
(i.e., there is no need to do every-
thing).

360. **Kágǽ tàṅkpóló ko a nyíkà à, wuṅ
à po a yèkòyèkòyǐ :**

Even though the toad will not bite, it will

give one a chill *if he handles it* (i.e., it will do one thing or the other).

361. **Kágbó nyá bàbò, wuṇ gá yì'gbàṇ o :**

The strength of the water-bottle is in the cord *used in carrying it*. (" The chain is no stronger than its weakest link. ")

362. **Kágbóci gà 'á suṇ 'o 'gwa, kágă wo mătṣa à, wuṇ 'á wo le 'kpá :**

If a strong man takes hold of you and you do not laugh, he will jerk your arm out (i.e., it isn't policy to show ill feelings towards a superior).

363. **Kágbóci gúbà a du konkòrò u géna à :**

Two men in authority cannot *agree long enough* to cook a mangel.

364. **Kágbóci lágwasuṇ 'nya, bòlànci lá gwa kpé :**

When a strong man has hold of a thing, the weak man lets go. (Might is right.

365. **Kágbóci pa kàrà nínmĩ wuṇ à :**

A strong man never makes up a load for himself *equal to his strength*.

366. **Kákùn nà eka tun 'o bìcí nà, kángá wo gǎ, we à dà 'dà o :**

After a thorn has pierced your foot then you put on sandals. (Cp. " Lock the stable door after the horse has been stolen.")

367. **Kàlànkpà wọn rógó, u jin 'vùn à :**

The trap caught a stone, not meat (i.e., there is no profit in it).

368. **Ka mi jin bǐngi yà 'zà kpátá, mi jin bǐngi yà we yi à :**

Even though I am a gnat to every one else, I am not one to you. (Said by one in authority when despised by some one under him.)

369. **Kápa kápa a gí màşê o, tatacin à jin a 'mi dzwàgwà :**

The way to eat *màşê* is to nibble around the edge, if you bite into the centre it will leave your mouth greasy. (There is a right and a wrong way.)

370. **Kàrà ázǎ 'zà, èka ge etí u bo à :**

If a load is too heavy, then the pad has not been placed on the head properly.

371. **Kàrà fókó u lǒ 'zà à, àmā wun-
èpà u zò :**

A light load will not tire one, but it looks unwieldly.

372. **Kàrà nyá gbă gúwo, wun-ácé 'wò
'gwa :**

A load of twenty thousand coweries is too big for a sleeve.

373. **Kàsà nà ba gbàngbă dà-nà, wun-
tsó dà bè hankàli u nyi :**

The crocodile stalking the duck finds that it is also watching him.

374. **Katambà wónçín lá gbodonjì
gbàyě à :**

The large porch does not despise the clay pit *from whence it was dug*.

375. **Kata nà de gbètí à nà, sàsà ban-
za :**

A roof without the pointed top is not pretty.

376. **Kata nà wo gà 'ă yà ega cín à**

**nà, ga lugwa u lo bo dà yǎyé
mà :**

The room that you do not intend to give
to the stranger do not let him lounge
about in it.

377. **Kata wasa Sòkó, ezà nà gǎ wuṇ
à zùṇ u nà, wuṇ à tsu bè lèn-
ze nyi há 'sín o :**

The one who attempts to thatch the house
that God has predestined to remain
unthatched, will die with his scythe in
his belt. (God's plans cannot be al-
tered.)

378. **Ka wọṇgi o, wuṇ ègbĩṇ nuwọṇ :**
Even the darter bird is drowned *sometimes*.
(Cp. Accidents will happen. ”)

379. **Kàṇagi yífùrù tá ekpàn o, dàdà
u gba o :**

The monkey that leaps up on to the buck-
et is only following the actions of his
parents.

380. **Ke èbo we bè ejè gĩ nyi nyá èmì
ndǎeší nyi o ? :**

What makes you tired of eating porridge

in *ndǎeši's* home (i.e., where one is well fed will he complain)?

381. **Ke ké bìcí gútwani o ?:**

How is it that you have only nine toes ?
(This is said of one who has spent all his money.)

382. **Kendò nà cecengi yì nà ácingǎ nuwọ́n yì o :**

According to the size of the blister, so is the amount of water (i.e., things are just as they appear).

383. **Kendò nà dzǔngi tso 'zà nà, ácin u bó a 'kpá o :**

In just so much as the small entrance is a short way out, so does it skin the back (i.e., you gain in one and loose in another).

384. **Kendò nà sùnsúnnú yébo bàtà nà, bàtà áma nuwọ́n :**

Even though the swamp-grass likes the swamp, the swamp becomes too deep for it *and kills it*.

385. **Kendò nà wo sá bùkátà nà, ácin we à wò wuń o :**

Just as you have made your arrangements,
so will you have to follow them out.

386. **Kiátiákiátiá gǺ, wuṇ à lǺ kàrà
ràkuṇ :**

The donkey said that he would carry a
camel's load. (Don't brag.)

387. **Kínkèrè tuṇ tákuṇ ? :**

Do scorpions sting stones ? (Cp. " You are
spending your strength for nought.. ")

388. **Kínkèrè wuṇ ètuṇ 'tí à :**

Scorpions do not sting people on the head.

389. **Kókó só mi à, mi à só kókó ? :**

Since the wart has not hidden itself for
me, will I hide it ? (Expect others to
treat you as you treat them.)

390. **Kókó, u kuṇ 'nya na u kú na à :**

A growth on a thing is never as big as
the thing itself.

391. **Kókó zùṇmǺ tacuṇ, eyé le u yé à,
egwa mǺ tuṇ bo à :**

The wart on the centre of the back cannot
be seen with the eye, nor reached with
the hand.

392. **Kpákó gạ 'wó 'ši :**

Two hundred is more than twenty (i.e., there is no comparison).

393. **Kpákó kùṅkwàṅ kpákó, kpákó wara kpákó :**

Two hundred strung cowries are two hundred, and two hundred loose cowries are two hundred (i.e., a king is a king).

394. **Kpàṅkàṅà u wu 'gi à, egwa u bà wuṅ o:**

Dangerous play does not kill a child but it may break his arm.

395. **Kpankòrò bìsà, enà gá tun bo, wuṅ à sunzùnyě :**

When fire reaches a node on the *bìsà* grass it becomes *ashamed and burns slower* (One's progress is impeded in a difficult place.)

396. **Kpàṅkotìbù ! nuwọṅ fé mǹgè o zǎ à :**

Water standing in a pot will never rise.

397. **Kpára kpára kà tsutsu à, sònǔ sònǔ wuṅ èkà yìzè le à :**

Always being in a hurry does not hinder death, neither does going slowly hinder living.

398. **Kpárá sókùn u yì o, u dà nîn bo
u ma dà dê bo :**

He is a beam in a wall being both inside and outside. (This is said of one who understands both sides of the case.)

399. **“'Kú bè làzìn nyi,” u de 'wùn à,
àmâ bambè nyá gbògì nyi :**

“Good morning”, does not cause offence except in the case of the baboon *for traps are set for them.*

400. **Kúkpáká fé nínmĩ tsúkùn ó, gǎ,
wun èye tsúkùn de.**

A tortoise in a bone says that it has more bones inside.

401. **Kúkpáká wun ètígí à, àmâ wun
èbayé :**

The tortoise does not cry but it blinks (i.e., get as near to the original as possible).

402. **Kúkúndùkú kàmadùkú ! zukùn**

na a nù yàbà na, wuṇ gá a nù yakági o :

The hoe that is used to hoe bananas is also used to hoe red peppers (i.e., both had the same opportunity).

403. **Kútí na ezà kpeye na, wuṇ à nyi wuṇ à :**

One will not defame the juju he believes in. (Don't be two-faced.)

404. **Kútízì wuṇ èwu wòcèci à :**

To threaten in the name of a juju will not kill a trader (i.e., some things are proof against juju).

405. **Láfiyà èlǎ Gǒyì fín 'ge à :**

It is not good will that compels the Fulah to drink beer.

406. **Lá 'ga sá 'mì 'á èmìtsǒ da gbà-tà o :**

To bring a stranger in is to put the host in debt.

407. **Lá n gasuṇ wũncìṇ ge ga lá m batà :**

To trouble me is better than to forget me.

408. Lá 'nya wǔ 'zà, lá u da gí re be
wǔncìn jìn nyabótá à :

To show a person something, and then eat
it, is not stinginess.

409. Lá 'yé wǔ cigbạn kánsáná, fum-
fúró gò kînnì :

While waiting for a dried up tree to fall,
a green one falls instead (i.e., often
while expecting the death of an aged
person, we learn that one in the prime
of life has died).

410. Lèkenlèke nà lá nínmǐ u dà nà-
kó kà nà :

The cattle egret sets itself at herding cattle.
(Said of one who works when not
asked to.)

411. Lěngòjìn ebó èkụnni o, wụn èkụn
dàdà mì à :

The apprentice will soon get tired but the
master will not. (Everyone to his
trade.)

412. Lùkóngi gǎ, eyé bo u kpe tákùn-
céci ye o, kácìn à, ezà wǎngi
kà à :

The dove says that by the *expression in the eye* he knows a stone-thrower, otherwise a man is not bent over.

413. **Lùkóngi gúbà a ènyă dòzì fínzo bo à :**

Two doves will never drive one another away from a threshing floor (i.e., why quarrel when there is enough for all and to spare).

414. **Lùkóngi tá 'gbán n ta 'gbán ma :**

The dove told of his wisdom so I told of mine (i.e., meet him on his own ground).

415. **Lulu te à, a fín wun à :**

If the thread does not break there will be no need to join it.

416. **Lulu yí sun re, biyé à da yavun à :**

As long as there is cotton growing there will be no need to go naked (i.e., if it can be had we will have it).

417. **Mada gá ègùn 'zà, a kìn láya gô wun à :**

When a person is hungry they don't make

a charm *to prevent hunger* and hang it on him (i.e., use common sense).

418. **Mạḍagùṅci u kpe 'jè ásámù ye à:**
A hungry person does not know poisoned food.

419. **Màkuṇḍuṇnu ègĩ 'gó à, sáyí nàkà:**
The hyena does not eat grass but meat (i.e., give a serviceable gift).

420. **Màkuṇḍuṇnu gá èfín nuwọ́n, eṣì-gi à de ? :**
While the hyena is drinking water will the dog get any ?

421. **Màkuṇḍuṇnu gǎ, u wo 'mì ndǎ u mǎ wo nyá nnǎ, egi nà u tá gwa gò nà, u de lefi à:**
The hyena said that he heard the father and also the mother say *that they would give the bad child to a hyena*, then for putting forth his paw and taking the child, he was not to blame.

422. **Mànǎfiki nyá kànàngũn, gwakpa bo u ɖa o :**
The hypocrisy of the drum is in the drum-

mer's elbow (i.e., put the blame in the right place).

423. **Mạnááwoci wuṇ gá èbe 'zìsa nyi o :**
An ungrateful person causes others to be ashamed.

424. **Mạná munu, yìsa fà n gwa dà 'fú o :**
It is a sweet kindness when the food falls out of the hand into honey.

425. **Mạn nà de fùla dàra à nà, u gǻ, "Enyà gá èlè a 'tí :"**
The priest who has not got a red Fez cap says, " That thing makes the head itch. " (The fox and the grapes.)

426. **"Mi à lo 'zì, mi à lo zì, " wuṇ gá èlǻ 'zì lokpá o :**
" I am going, I am going, " that is what makes the journey so long.

427. **"Mi de kú-kú-kú- kú, " Mi de kú-kpáká :**
" I have found a tor-tor-tor-tor, " " I have found a tortoise ". (Do not hesitate or some one will get ahead of you.)

428. **Mi de 'wó ení nyína à, wũncìn
mà à kà mi gbă nyi de 'sun à :**
I haven't got a cowry to-day, but that
does not hinder me from having two
thousand to-morrow.
429. **"Mi le 'zì gāká," wun àgbà egi
nà a mà ezì gá o nà :**
"I have lived in that town a long time,"
does not make me equal to the child
who was born there.
430. **Misun èlo 'dzǒ lo, eyé bo egà
dà o :**
The mouth laughs it off, but the trouble
can be seen in the eye.
431. **Misun nà bè yíkò nà, wun à zì
ení nyi kó à :**
The mouth that whistles will not refuse
to sing (i.e., some things go in pairs).
432. **Mita dzukó wun à wu cigbàn à :**
The market noise will never kill a tree.
433. **Mi tánya mi tsu à, goró zì 'mì? :**
I was sick but did not die, should the un-
dertakers feel badly ?

434. **Mi tú u yé hárí eyé átú 'wó ení :**

I waited for him until my eye became a
cowry shell (i.e., formed a cataract).

435. **'M bo biṣe kuṇ kàrà à, wuṇ átun
látí, u gà ázè kàrà 'tí :**

To carry a fowl about at home is not a
load, but by the time one reaches the
farm, it has become a head load (i.e.,
it may not amount to much at first,
but it will later on).

436. **Mmà dèdè wuṇ gá èkún mǺgi o,
àmǺ mǺgi nǺ wónyè nǺ, lá
mmà kún :**

It was a bad uncle that sold his nephew,
but if the nephew is smart he will sell
his uncle.

437. **NǺkà áwo, ezun wo gǺ u :**

If the meat in the oven is dry then the
oven is dryer.

438. **NǺmpǺ kukù u wón 'nǺ 'mì
bo à :**

A leopard is never too old to catch goats.

439. **NǺncé gà ámǺ, zùnyě áli tanci :**

If the poison is good then the bow need not be ashamed.

440. **Nankó ágbǫ o, a wá u tò 'do-
gbà :**

When a cow is lost they will search for it even under the granary (i.e., when seeking spare no trouble).

441. **Nankó èdǻjǫ yà bàtà à :**

The cattle don't thank the meadow.
(Often we are not thankful for the daily blessings.)

442. **Nankó lo ègǻ kpàkùnmǻ fédùn à :**

When a cow goes to pasture her hide is not left behind.

443. **Ndǻkpági gǻ a gba 'gà nugù-
ci :**

The tortoise says that they ought to keep to the first agreement.

444. **Ndǻ 'mì le, u tígí mǻḍa à :**

The head of the house will never cry because of hunger. (Do not tell your troubles abroad.)

445. **Ndǻ 'zà gá èzǻ 'gbà, egi otsó u**

fé u zũn gǒke :

If the father is working that hard that he is breaking an axe, then the son will be breaking a hatchet.

446. **Nínmĩ enyatsuci o, áciṇ a de 'nya bè ráyi nyi o ; tò nínmĩ enya bè ráyi nyi bo, a de enyatsuci o :**

Among dead things will be found something with life ; and among the living things are the dead. (There is some good in the worst, and some bad in the best of us.)

447. **Nîn gà áfu 'zà, jèkùṇ yì 'lĩ o :**

When a person is full, what remains bears witness to it.

448. **Níniní bìcì wa 'gun bo, tàṅkpóló tsá, gǎ, wuṇ à wa gúbàbà, u ci ákpè pàrà ta bo :**

One foot at a time is the way to get out of the mud, but the frog said that he would get both out at once, and landed over on his back.

449. **Nnăkó ègà, gǎ, “ Gò 'mí lá dă 'zo**

**gĩ,” wotsó à gà, gǻ, “Gò ’zo lá
dà emí gĩ.”**

If the old lady is always saying “Here is some oil to put in the beans,” you ought sometimes to say “Here are some beans to put in the oil.

**450. Nnǻ niní mǻ biṣe, ’zawũṇ à yì
títí :**

One hen hatched the chicken but they will serve different purposes.

**451. Nukpayì gúbà a èlǻmitú dòzì ban-
za à :**

Two grey beards do not follow one another for nothing.

452. Nunfù ge a ’á ka ’ga à :

If the farmland is good they will not give it to a stranger.

**453. Nusa dà ’bà o enya nyi à, ámâ
a lá egwa ’bà ’nà dīṇ a wa :**

When an old person is near by nothing will be spoiled, but exception must be made in the case of fire.

**454. Nusa gà ábici nyá tsutsu, dzá-
kàngi à gĩkiṇni ciṇ u lě :**

The old man runs away from death, but the child stands and looks at it.

455. **Nusa tûtuntí u yì o, ezà ndo=ndò èku 'bà dà ya kpe u :**

An old man is a dumping ground, everybody throws sweepings on him (i.e., everyone tells him their troubles).

456. **Nuwọn ámăló, zèmpà à de fín :**

Even if water is scarce, the threshold will have enough to drink (i.e., it will get the dish water).

457. **Nuwọn èdăyěnú bá à :**

Water does not become sour.

458. **Nuwọn èwo 'mi kara bo à :**

The water never dries up where the crab lives. (Said of one who always has plenty.)

459. **Nuwọn gà áwo, tsùrù gà ádăgwa àmâ bambè tsùrù Mămăgi nyi :**

When the river dries up the falls also dry up, but not the falls of Mămăgi. (This river never dries up.)

460. **Nuwọn nà èjè nà wun à bo à, u mą à li 'fo fá à :**

Running water never gets tired, nor does it stop for a day's rest.

461. Nuwọn nà sé bàbò à nà, wuṇ gá èbe dùkú nyi o :

It is the water that doesn't fill the pot, that makes the most noise.

462. Nuwọn nyá 'wó ení, bè nyá 'wó 'ši nyi, bőkùṇ níní u yì o :

One cowry's worth of water, or twenty cowries' worth is all the same color.

463. Nyagbàṇ kìn ba, u jìn eli kìn ba à :

The body prostrated on the ground is no sure proof of humility.

464. Nyagbàṇ nà efè èsun ci 'á cigbàṇ lè ya dà nuwọn o nà, nyagbàṇ gá ma nuwọn sun u ci u jè dà lo :

The same anger which caused the wind to rip a branch off a tree and cast it into the water, also caused the water to drift it down the river.

465. 'Nya nà a lá ta yìzè nà, wuṇ gá a gà 'ă nà u kìn o :

That which was used to make the world
will also be used to destroy it.

466. 'Nya nà ezà à gǐ nà, wun gá u
ye 'nà u dà o :

One pokes the fire that is under his own
food (i.e., attend to your own affairs.)

467. 'Nya nà gá mǎ nà, wun gá sì
'nya bi tí o :

That which is extra good is a forerunner
of something bad.

468. 'Nya nà mǎ misun 'o bo nà, wun
à jìn gbàkó 'o 'gùn, tò 'nyà nà
lu misun 'o bo nà, wun à jìn
gbàkó 'o ànfani :

Whatever is sweet in the mouth will be
bitter in the stomach, and whatever is
bitter in the mouth will be sweet in the
stomach.

469. 'Nya nà mǎ só nà, u sundà 'nya
nà mǎ 'bà wà nà :

A good hider is afraid of a good finder.

470. 'Nya nà sàkǎ nà, u bé tsún 'nya
nà le 'gó nà tsún :

Whatever rises early will come and find

that which slept in the grass, (Cp. The early bird catches the worm).

471. 'Nyà nà tun Rúbu nà, wun à gbà Bìdǒ à :

What has reached Rúbu will not miss Bìdǒ. (It will not be overlooked.)

472. 'Nyà nà 'zà dzò nà, wun gá wun èmǻ o :

What a man sows that shall he also reap.

473. Nyankpa fú ya u kà tswaci ázì-ki nyi jin à :

Flying sparks do not hinder the blacksmith in his work.

474. Nyantsǒ u le nyá u yé, u gǻ, u le ènyà yé à :

The owner gazing upon his belongings would not say that he saw something evil.

475. Nyika, wun èzà 'ni à : a ècé 'fo kà wuntsó gǻ :

There is never too much fish in the sauce, it is only occasionally that one can get fish to eat. (There is never too much of a good thing.)

476. Nyimi dèdè gāmá gá 'mì wasa
wun à gūn 'nà dà 'm 'bo :

A bad wife is better than an empty house
for she will make a fire in it.

477. Nyína yì yìzè, èsun yì èku :

To-day is this world, to-morrow is the
next.

478. Nyizàgi gá ále kútí yé, u gá 'á
'yé pín :

If a woman looks at a juju she will have
to wipe her eyes.

479. Pínpin donci wun èlà donci à,
'bà nà wo le u yé nà, bagá we
à lu u gwa o :

Rolling a mortar will not break it, there-
fore take it back to the place where you
got it from (i.e., return what you bor-
row).

480. Ràkun ègí 'kà, kiátiákiátiá u yé-
gá, 'nya nà dá nà :

The camel was eating thorns and the don-
key thought they were soft. (Said
when one imitates another.)

481. **Ròbo nyá èdă wun èzĩn kìn
nyi à :**

Food for bats is not found on the ground.

482. **Ròbo tànkpóló gun 'fìn à :**

The toad's food is not found up off the ground. (God will place nor blessings within our reach.)

483. **Rògònkpe, ebó zùnmà u gò o, u
ma ʃìdzòʃì, yitsó tsá èlă u gò-
zùnmà o :**

Remorse comes to warn us of after results so it is really a forerunner, but we take it and place it behind.

484. **Sàṇàgi wun gá ètè yèkó nyá jì-
ka a :**

A small bag closes the mouth of a large bale.

485. **Sàngi u tun bà 'li à, nàkà à ke
u bá :**

The birch rod doesn't reach the character but the body will make the connection.

486. **Sàngì yèkó wuṇ èdìn 'zà ení gbăugi a:**

The switch-grass by the roadside does not strike one person only.

487. **Sòkó bò 'fo, ndă 'á 'yé nŭ wuṇ à bò ndă otsó, ke wuṇ à jìn o:**

God took away a life and father was sad, if God had taken father what could the have done.

488. **“Sòkó dé,” Kiadia gba Gǒyì:**

“God knows,” was the answer that the Kiadia people made to the Fulahs *when asked if they would acknowledge the Fulah regime* (i.e., don't commit yourself).

489. **Sòkó èdĩnyé à:**

God is in no hurry.

490. **Sòkó jìn 'nya fi bàbòkó o yà we, u mą jìn fi bingi o yà mi; kágă wo tswá bingi mi à, mi à bě lá bàbòkó nyá wotsó là ya:**

God gave you a large calabash full of

blessings, and he gave me a small one ;
 if you are not careful with my small
 calabash, I will break your big one.

491. **Sòkó kpe kendò nà u jịn kàba bè
 zùnyě u nyi nà :**

God knew how to hide the shame (naked-
 ness) of the maize with the husks.

492. **Sòkó kùn, swàfà mánîn :**

When it thunders the child in pawn is
 glad *it is going to rain and he won't*
have to work on the farm. (Cp. It is an
 ill wind that blows no one any good.)

493. **Sòkó nà sá 'mi nà wun à tè wun
 à :**

God who made the mouth will not close it
 up. (Cp. The Lord will provide.)

494. **Sòkó yà a 'nya u sazi à, yìzèci
 wun à yà 'o 'nya, wun à sa
 'o zì :**

God gives and does not remind us con-
 tinually of it; the world gives and con-
 stantly reminds us.

495. **Sòkó yà kurangi o, kácìn à, enà
 latí èta 'zà à :**

God gave the red deer its color ; deer do not use red cam wood.

496. **Sòkó u le gara yé ke u wọnćin nà, u ci lá zùnyě yà kájì :**

God saw that the white-ant hill was large, so he gave favor to the small one.

497. **Şiáko dùnműdùn kạnádzá ! a tun dzákạn 'jè gǐ nà, a tun u 'kpa cé à :**

A child is sent home for its meal not to go and spin a top.

498. **Şiríya dá nyá 'zà gbakó u jin 'nyaba à, kámi nà u de yìzè nà, áćin wun èjin o :**

For an old man to wear a fancy cord is not a sign of pride, for when he was in his prime that is how he dressed.

499. **Sunà zà yì dzămi wun o, àmă nyă yǐgbèci yì kayimi :**

A man's name is his bridle, *he stops when called* ; but a thief's is his spur, *he runs when called*.

500. **Súnşun kpátá u bè binákún :**

To remain quiet is the same as being angry.
(Be sociable.)

501. **Sǔsǔmǎrǐ! èdě sunsùnçi wun
èwo 'cìn à :**

A poor man's cloth never smells of dye
(i.e., he cannot afford it).

502. **Swàfà à dā bo mi à gò 'wó, u dā
bo à mi à gò 'wó :**

If I have to take pawn I will get my money,
and if I do not get pawn I will
get my money.

503. **Tá gwa ngò 'kún sókùn, ekún
otsó gò 'zà lě :**

Stretch out your hand and help lift the
corpse over the wall, for the corpse has
lifted others over.

504. **Tákotalábí! ebe bạ tábà à :**

The red monkey does not break down the
tobacco plant.

505. **Tákùn na ènyi nyankpa 'mi na,
wun gá a lá da u tá re o :**

The stone that bent the edge of the iron
is used to straighten it out again.

506. **Tákùṇ na pìṇ gwa na, wuṇ áfo
gwa tsokòwǒngi :**

The stone that is too large for the hand
will not be used in a guessing game.
(You are not included.)

507. **Tàṅkpóló ta tsúkùṇ, eṣì wọṇ u
gò 'wó :**

The toad was picking a bone, and the dog
caught him and made him pay a fine
(i.e., let everyone keep to his own).

508. **Tàre bè ezà nyi, ezà ájìṇ u gá-
gwa o :**

By the help of another one gains freedom.

509. **Tàrùbà bè 'yě̀nà nyi, kící we à
lǎ o :**

Which do you chose, weak sight or total
blindness ?

510. **Tà-'zà-tà'tí-a-gi, na de zògùṇ gú-
bà à, ci gǎ wuṇ à yǎyé zèmpà
o na :**

A person having only one mat deceives
himself when he says he will sleep
outside (i.e., if it rains his mat will
get wet and he has no other).

511. **Téténgi egwa lè cigbạn ba o, nạ-kà ci jịn àsára :**

By just a very little did the arm miss the tree, and thus prevented the body from misfortune.

512. **Tílè de ebe ci èkún 'kó o :**

Necessity causes the monkey to sell shea-butter fruit. (It is his food.)

513. **Tílè lá kạnagi mủ yaká o :**

Compulsion makes the monkey eat red-pepper. (Hunger is good sauce.)

514. **Tílè, tílè, Mặmặ Kòlỗ nu 'gbè :**

It was only by force that Mặmặ Kòlỗ went to the hoeing gathering (i. e. he was compelled to work).

515. **Tílè wụn ècịn dùnfé 'bà bo à :**

Force will never be without a place to sit down.

516. **Títĩmặtì ! biyé sịdzò 'zà à :**

To walk backwards is not the correct way.

517. **Tò yerengi tò gòdò, elúgi gúbà zị kpáta o :**

A humming bird and a pelican, two birds

in the clearing (i.e., life is life however small the body).

518. **Tsòba wuṇ gá èbe yěgbà nyi o :**
Familiarity breeds contempt.

519. **Tsóci 'zà gá ápìṇ 'gbǻṇ, wuzì
wuṇ ápìṇ dzũṅgi o :**

If the master cannot squeeze in at the main entrance, the slave will be unable to enter the back gate.

520. **Tsùkùṇ kǻkò, wuṇ gá a sũṅwa
a ci wa na tá na :**

They use a crooked stick to get out a straight one (i.e., use what is at hand).

521. **Tsùkùṇ na a cé mǻkuṇduṇnu
na, ebà átiṇ a ci à lǻ wuṇ o :**

The stick that was thrown at the hyena *during the night*, will not be brought back till the morning.

522. **Tsutá gbàgbà, u mǻ yá :**

Pepper is small but it smarts.

523. **Tsutsu, èmitsǻ u yì o, u jìṇ 'ga
à, àmá 'fo na wuṇ à bě na,
wuṇ ázè 'ga yà yi 'fo gá :**

Daeth is the owner of the house and is no

stranger, but when it comes, it will be a stranger to us that day.

524. **Tsutsu gò nusa nyi, u gò dzákàngi nyi à :**

Death becomes the old ; it does not become the young.

525. **Tsutsu lakoro, dzákàngi à fe wuṇ à :**

If death were to blossom, a child should not pluck it.

526. **Tukpa mi ádzwa fini :**

My ear has begun to sprout leaves. (Said after one has been listening for a long time.)

527. **Tukpa èwo 'gà gúbà à :**

The ear doesn't hear two words *at once*.

528. **Tukpapa u lugwa tukpa átsu à :**

Contant reminding does not allow the ear to die (i.e., to forget).

529. **Tunci ndă a tà o, a tà ndă à :**

They may deceive the father's messenger, but they cannot deceive the father.

530. U da Tùm bo à, u ma da Tùm bo à :

He is neither at Tùm nor at Tùm (i.e., he is on the fence).

531. U fín nuwọn na sì na à, sáyí nuwọn na ávun na :

He does not drink water that has settled, but water that is riled (i.e., he likes to be contrary).

532. U gà ávò, wun à bẹ mwòtswá :

If it goes bad it will smell.

533. U gǎ wun à gĩ mǎnĩ à, àmá wun ègĩ romagi u :

He says that he will not eat caterpillars, but he drinks the soup of them.

534. U lá u fù nuwọn, u ma lá u gbo zùnmà :

He gave him a bath and then rubbed his back (i.e., he was well treated).

535. Vonkpára wun à kà sòkógbà à :

A potsherd cannot stop an aerolite.

536. Vùdùnnù yì èrĩ 'cìṇ o :

The finger-nails are a proof of the goodness of the indigo dye.

537. **We áfédùn ge we à nàkìn ge :**
If you sit down well you will rise up well.
(Do good in this life and you will not
be ashamed in the next.)
538. **We à gǎ, gǎ, a ga gbá 'o ma,
ga lugwa a tso 'o ma :**
If you do not wish to be dragged along,
why don't allow them to overtake you.
(Keep away from trouble.)
539. **We ákpe gǎ ecipcci má, wo pa
kân lě :**
If you know that roasted yams are sweet
then you had charge of a farm once.
540. **We à li 'nà dà dzufa? :**
Will you put fire in your pocket ?
541. **We ásó 'gùn, we à bě ásó tsu :**
If you are able to hide sickness you may
also be able to hide death (i.e., one
may become efficient).
542. **We gá gǎ gǎ, egi u ga ko 'yì ya
ma, egi gá wun à mǎ 'nunù à :**
If you say that the lad must not hoe down
any corn, he will not make a good
farmer.

(Cp. Experience is the best teacher.)

543. **We gá gá gǎ, nuwọn nyá 'zà
wun à gbịn à, nyá wotsó à tí
sonyí mà à :**

If you say, that the water another person put on, will not boil, then your own will not steam either. (Do not entertain unkind thoughts.)

544. **We gá pa 'gbàn nà wo gà áfé
cínwọn nà, bòngi we à de fe o :**

If you make a pruning stick thinking to pluck honour, yuu will pluck immature fruit [dishonour] (i.e., greatness is not easily obtained).

545. **Wo dá bişe lo 'bà nîn, wo gá à
zĩn gũlũ we à dǎ zĩn o :**

If you enter a city carrying a fowl you will come out carrying a vulture (i.e., food is scarce in a city).

546. **Wo ènì wo mà ènyà :**

You are drumming and also dancing (i.e., doing two things at a time).

547. **Wo gà ádàdà tsu, we à dàdà
zĩn 'zà :**

The sooner you die the sooner you will return in another person (i.e., your name will be given to the next child born in the family).

548. **Wo gà ágò 'tsú gwa dàngi o, wo lá nyakungbára wu ci yíta u bo :**

If you intend to take a rat from a cat you had better kill a lizard and place it in front of her.

549. **Wo gà 'ă kútí tú 'nya, lá 'yé be u dā re :**

When you place a juju on anything put your eye on it also (i.e., do not trust in uncertainties).

550. **Wo gá à lă dùkùn sakùn, wo ke u kà :**

If you are going to pick up a broken pot, put your hands around it.

551. **Wo gá bò jèkpe yà ràkpe wo lá u kpérí :**

If you make a dish of porridge without sauce for an ignorant nan, you had better tell him what to do with it (i.e.,

it is necessary to explain the simplest things to some people).

552. **Wo gá de tanzàri nà wo gà 'ǎ
dà enà 'gó nà, lá dà enà 'mì :**

If you have any antimony to blacken the eyelashes of wild animals, put it on the eyes of domestic ones first. (Cp. Charity begins at home.)

553. **Wo gá èjịn síri gǎ we à lo 'zì,
wo wún 'zà o, àmá kámi nà
wo gá dzùn nà, ezà wún we
yì o:**

While you are preparing to go on a journey, you own the journey, but after you have started, the journey owns you.

554. **Wo gá gà gǎ, we à tá lě, elúgi gà
'ǎ 'yì gǐ :**

If you are going to talk about olden times the birds will eat your corn (i.e., pay attention to your work).

555. **Wo gá gun langbà, langbà à tun
'o 'kà :**

If you climb a *langbà* tree, the thorns will prick you.

556. **Wo gá jịn “Mgbá” wo ba mgbá yé :**

If you say “Isn’t that so?” you had better give the wink with it.

557. **Wo gá le nusa yé èbici, kágă wun ènyă ’nyă à, àfè enyă ènyă u:**

If you see an old man running, he is either chasing something, or being chased.

558. **Wo gá le nuwon ’fú yà ’zà gă, u fín, u ci jịn yèbo à, wo le nyă tsulá yà u dégi :**

If you mix a drink of honey and water for a person, and he is not thankful, then mix some *tsulá* for him. (The *tsulá* is very bitter.)

559. **Wo gá lo gbàtàtsúnzì we ci dà lă nnă nyă ewó wọn, ze à bě wò gbàtà o ?**

If you go for the payment of a debt and seize the things by which they work

and trade, how can they then pay the debt ?:

560. **Wo gá lo 'mì nnǺ 'o, we áśá èmì nnǺgi o:**

When you are calling on your first-aunt call on your second-aunt also.

561. **Wo gá mạ 'gi dèdè, tílè 'o de; ndǺ dèdè gà 'Ǻ wo mạ, tílè lá wo de :**

If you have a bad child you are unfortunate, if you have a bad father you, are unfortunate (i.e., there is no help).

562. **Wo gá sì tswata ká ndondò dé, enǺ à bǽ tịn dǺ 'o 'nya :**

If you loiter about the blacksmith's shop all the time, a spark will fly and set fire to your clothes.

563. **Wo gǺ, we à tun giwóngiwo tun à, wotsó à de 'wó gǺ à :**

If you say that you will not send a messenger who withholds part of the money, then you will not receive any, for is the kind who can extort money for you.

564. **Wo gá yà gùnci cigbè, wo lugwa egùn u lo u nín bédzò, ebó u de 'bà u kpe kúnkún nyá cigbè ye :**

If you intend to give a sick man medicine let him get very ill first, so that he may see the benefit of your medicine.

565. **Wo gbódzú sá 'nyà gbàgbà, cé gwa 'á ya dà ba gbán gá :**

You thought you were shrewd when you cut the food into small pieces, but the one, who handles it and puts it back again, (i.e., does not buy) is more shrewd.

566. **Wo gún 'zà wo sá à, we águn langbàláci, wun à ba 'o ba à, wo gà ásá :**

If when passing another you do not turn to the side ; you will, whether it pleases you or not, when you meet a person carying thorns.

567. **Wo lá mi da gbán dà áfà 'dě, we ci gá we à bẹ 'ǎ 'dě dzũ mi èfogi o :**

You took me to the market place and stripped me of my clothing, and now you say you will reclothe me up a lane (i.e. as the punishment was public so ought the reparation to be).

568. **Wo nà gò 'ge yà kuci nà, wo gá à gò mǹngè dà yìzèci o :**

You, who took the beer to the spirit, must bring back the jug to the people.

569. **Wo nà lá 'ge lo fìn dà yà kǹnà nà, wotsó gá à gò mǹngè zǹn kìn nyi o :**

The one who carried the beer up to the monkey must bring back the jug to the earth.

570. **Wo, nà zè 'dě làkò yà Lológi nà, wo gá wú u ebágò o :**

You, who made over the cloth for Lológi are the one who taught her to be proud.

571. **Wo wún 'sà we, wún ába wo lá nyá 'o kǹ dìnnǹ :**

You own your salt, if it pleases you, you may use it to fry flies.

572. **Wọn n wọn átsotso : bò m bò**

mạ álokpá :

Catch me, is close by ; save me, is far away.

(When in trouble friends are few.)

573. Wun ágũn, u mạ ákayé :

It is all here but still I am bewildered.

(Said when one cannot make out what is wrong.)

574. Wun ákun nàkà, wun à kun 'zun :

If the meat has had enough heat the oven has also. (Both have had enough of this quarrel.)

575. Wun à tun kũn kpàta ci sé nu-won à :

She gets water before she reaches the watering place. (Said of one looking for trouble.)

576. Wun èwo wo a fà gbàtàci 'dě, àmà u gũn bè yavun nyi lě à :

He has heard say that they would strip a debtor of his clothing, but he has never met a naked person yet.

577. Yàbà mạ 'gi dèdè, 'á nnà u wu :

The banana bears bad fruit, for it kills its

mother (i.e., by breaking down the stalk).

578. **Yàgbàci nà wọnyé nà, u yì nín-
mǐ u Ebági o :**

The shrewd Yagba man calls himself an Ebági man. (By being polite he can pass in good society.)

579. **Yàwǒ de 'tí à, a lá egà wǔncìn
gbǐn lǐnà à :**

If a bride does not prove to be a good wife they will not blame the one who arranged the marriage.

580. **Yěbònci nyá Sàmbò, u gǎ, wun
à kún 'nya lo n zǐn à :**

The blind man of Sàmbò says that he will not sell a thing, to one who says " I 'll be back in a minute. "

581. **Ye èjin 'gùn ké 'gùn :**

You are making and leaving trouble (i.e., you are not settling the matter).

582. **Yěle ge gá wuwo :**

Seeing is better than hearing.

583. **Yèkó kpátí là mǎngè gbànwǒ, a
ye woro tú be, u là şitá :**

The first road to the watering place broke
thirty pots because it was uneven, there-
fore they made a new one and it broke
sixty. (Let well enough alone.)

584. **Yèkó kpáwún wu 'zà à, dà u, we
à bě ábo :**

A long road will never kill anyone, but if
you walk it, you will get tired. (Do
not fear a great task.)

585. **Yèkpa dèdè a kpa, a ci tú kata
'tí tè o :**

It was a bad thought that made them
build a fire-proof house. (Taking pre-
cautions means that you suspect.)

586. **Yěliyèli lu enya ndondò gwa à :**
Day after day will not allow anything to
remain unfinished.

587. **Ye 'nà gún, ye 'nà gà :**
Kindle a fire and then scatter it. (Do not
destroy your own work.)

588. **Yeşí bàtá tsana o, yeşí bàtá èfa
o :**

During the night the fever increases, and
during the night the fever abates.

589. Yězàgòwǒ nyá gùnci, u gǎ, bǒci
ge à, wùṇ à fín cigbè be à :

The hard-faced sick man said that the doctor
was no good and that he would not
take any more medicine.

590. Yi gǎ ájè, yi à bǐ ámbà kpàta
mǎ :

If we drift down we shall arrive at the
landing place.

591. Yìgbèci ba mi gǎ yěkáci :

I think more of a thief than I do of a for-
ward person.

592. Yìgbèci èwǔnyà 'lu à :

A thief never tells how often he has been
thrashed.

593. Yìkuṇnuci ágbìṇ, 'nyà nà nyi bo
nà dókuṇ :

When a palm tree falls, the loss is a very
great one. (When a great man dies the
country suffers a great loss.)

594. Yisa gǎ ágá mǎ, lá u fín tò cè-
ki :

If the *yisa* food is sweet, drink it with the
settlings. (Enjoy a good thing.)

595. **Yìsa gà ágbǒ, wuṇ ágbàṇ nu-
wṇ :**

If the *yìsa* cake is a large one it will make
a thick gruel.

596. **Yìsà nà jṇ ázìki nà, kṇ bo a gí pa
u 'tí o :**

If the granary is full, it will be necessary
to stand up to tie the top. (Prosperity
can be seen.)

597. **Yìzè bo a jṇ yìzè o, a pa 'kún
cékà à :**

In the world they do worldly things,
but they never carry a corpse about.
(Do not act ridiculous.)

598. **Yìzè gbàngbǎ yi èle gbání o :**

We are living in the age of ducks now (i.e.,
young ducks run on ahead of the old
ones, so do the children of to-day).

599. **Yìzè, okú yìzè ; kámi, okú kámi :**

The world, hurrah for the world : the age,
hurrah for the age !

600. **Yìzè sì bo sì àmá kámi tsá yì
títí o :**

The world remains the same, it is only the times that change.

601. 'Zà dzúró u gá gba 'o dzú o, ebó-gábo nà wo le gạgạ yé nà we áyàbǎ o :

A red man struck you in the face, and that is why you step to one side when ever you see a red ant-hill.

602. 'Zà 'gà wǔ u bè radzá :

To teach a person is like provoking him (i.e. he is made to keep at it).

603. 'Zà gbàngbǎnci wun èlǎ 'gà gạ 'zà sun à :

A sensible person will not trouble another over a *small* matter.

604. 'Zà gúbà èlele, 'zà ení ci èdìn ta-cìn, wawa wun èle a yé o :

If two persons are sleeping on a mat and one wants to be in the centre, he must think the other a fool.

605. 'Zà nà à yà Makun 'rya nà, u kpe Katsa 'bà :

If anyone would give Makun a present,

he surely knows the way to Katsa,
Makun's village.

606. 'Zà nà bi lě nà, wuṇ gá tsá yí
bi re o :

The one who had a bad character still retains it. (It is difficult to get rid of a bad name.)

607. 'Zà nà èwǎ 'wùṇ nà, u gǎ yìsa
ádzu o :

The one who is seeking trouble says that the *yìsa* food is watery. (At its very best it is a thin gruel.)

608. 'Zà nà èwǎ 'zà nà, wuṇ à jìṇ
'nyà nà wuṇ à de 'zà nà :

The person who wants to have followers, must do that which will bring him followers.

609. 'Zà nà de kùṇkwà nà, wuṇ gá
a èmà wara o :

The one who owns strung cowries, is the one to whom they will loan loose cowries. (If you have security you can borrow.)

610. 'Zà nà ègbìṇ micìṇní dà Edù o

**nà, wuṇ èbe u kuṇdó be ; 'zà
nà èto u fín nà, wuṇ èké u
ké :**

The one who expectorates in the Niger River helps to swell it, and the one who drinks from it helps to lower it. (Every little counts.)

611. **'Zà nà gá bè nà, u ba 'nya u :**

Whoever wishes to blow why let him make his own *whistle* (i.e., do not borrow).

612. **'Zà nà mǺ 'nító nà, wuṇ à sa
nínmǐ u kaye bi à :**

A good singer will never give himself a bad name.

613. **'Zà nana ága yéká u yé dìn dà
evo bo à :**

This person is too shrewd, he cannot be drawn into a calabash.

614. **'Zà nana u dà yèkó lě à, sáyí
kàdà :**

This person never took a straight road before, always a crooked one. (Said of one who doesn't do the right thing.)

615. 'Zà nà sì kîñ bo nà, u bè kpe
'yé 'kò ye à :

The onlooker, sitting, thinks that he knows
all about boxing. (Cp. It is easier said
than done.)

616. 'Zà nà tsò 'dù nà, wuñ èto 'dù
fín :

The one who is near the Niger, will drink
of its water (i.e., if you are near one in
authority, you will benefit by his in-
fluence).

617. 'Zà nà tsu nà, wuñ gá èdîñ 'zà nà-
zì ké nà gwa o :

The one who died *first* is the one who is
dragging down the rest.

618. Zànà, wuñ gá èsa bǒcí o :

The inexperienced man cured the doctor
(i.e., the non-professional man may
have the experience).

619. 'Zà ndondò nà gá we nà, u yé
mǎkézè yà we yì à :

You are unable to surround the one
greater than yourself.

620. **Zebi, wun áta 'o 'yazùn o, eya we à lo 'kpàn à :**

If a mean man is steering your canoe it will not reach the other side.

621. **Zùnyě nà Sòkó yà kaba nà, wun gá u yà we yi o :**

The piety [covering] that God gave to the maize he has also given to you.

622. **Zìkò èlǎ zìkò ba 'zà :**

Black will blacken people (i.e., shun evil).

623. **Zìnkiri u nyi 'nya à, wun ège 'nya ge :**

Delay does not spoil things, it makes them better.



SHONGA, NIGERIA.

1916 Rattray Ashanti.pdf

ASHANTI PROVERBS

(THE PRIMITIVE ETHICS OF A SAVAGE PEOPLE)

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL

WITH

GRAMMATICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL NOTES

BY

R. SUTHERLAND RATTRAY

F.R.G.S., F.R.A.I.

DIPLÔMÉ IN ANTHROPOLOGY, OXFORD

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER, ASHANTI; QUALIFIED INTERPRETER

IN HAUSA, TŪI (ASHANTI), CHINYANJA, MŌLE

AUTHOR OF 'HAUSA FOLK-LORE', 'CHINYANJA FOLK-LORE'

WITH A PREFACE BY

SIR HUGH CLIFFORD, K.C.M.G.

GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GOLD COAST COLONY

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1916

288707 33
6.
13.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN the year 1879 a book of *Tshi Proverbs* was published by the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society. This work, which was edited by the late Rev. J. G. Christaller, contained some '3,600 proverbs in use among the negroes of the Gold Coast, speaking the Asante and Fante language'.

The collection, to use the words of the compiler, consisted of proverbs, '*taken down by the missionaries themselves from the oral communications of certain elders or of other old or younger people, or were written by native assistants who increased their previous knowledge by learning from experienced countrymen*'.

The book in question is entirely in the vernacular. It does not contain any translation, notes or other explanatory matter, though had the Editor (the Rev. J. G. Christaller) lived he would have 'added a translation and explanation to the proverbs'.

To the present writer (who, during his four years of service in Ashanti, had acquired a colloquial knowledge of the language), it seemed a misfortune that such a store of interesting and valuable material, and so much '*wit and wisdom*', should have been, for over thirty years, buried in the comparative obscurity in which such a work must needs lie. It must literally be a closed book to all but a very few persons, confined in this case to those missionaries of West Africa, who can understand and speak the Tŵi or Ashanti language, and to their native teachers and scholars. The present writer, therefore, wrote to the Basel Missionary Society and asked permission to translate some of these proverbs. Sanction was most kindly given by the Rev. B. Groh. It is therefore to the Basel Mission in general, and more particularly to the late Rev. J. G. Christaller (whose name is worthy to rank with that of the late Dr. Clement Scott, and with that of Mr. A. C. Madan, in

the field of African linguistic research), to whom any thanks from the larger public are now due. The task of the present writer has been that of commentator and translator only, from the materials collected by these pioneers.

The eight hundred odd proverbs given in the present work have been selected chiefly with a view to showing:—

1. Some custom, belief, or ethical determinant pure and simple, which may be of interest to the anthropologist.

2. Some grammatical or syntactical construction of importance to the student of the language.

The notes that are added after each proverb are also for these two classes of readers.

The writer would crave the pardon of the former class of student for these brief notices, which are only intended to 'help out' or explain a proverb when necessary. Any attempt to go very fully into customs which a particular saying touches on, is beyond the scope and object of the present work.

An almost literal translation of each proverb has been given, as this work is intended primarily for students of the language. Some attempt has been made to group the proverbs chosen from the original work (in which all are alphabetically arranged) under the various heads, suggested by the person, animal, object, custom, virtue, or vice, &c., round which the saying is woven.

The numbers given at *the end* of each proverb are those under which they will be found in the original collection.

From the environment in which these proverbs were first collected, one might suppose that they would not be entirely free from missionary influence, hence the present writer thinks that a few remarks concerning the people whose sayings are here recorded seem somewhat necessary. Of the 3,600 proverbs examined some few seem to bear traces of European influence. All such have been omitted from the present work. In translating such as are here chosen, in no single case has reliance been placed on the writer's own knowledge of the language alone.

Every saying has been verified and re-verified by actual inquiry among the Ashantis themselves. The result of these investigations has been peculiarly instructive. All the proverbs herein contained are household words among *the old people*, whereas to the younger rising generation of educated or semi-educated natives they are often unknown, and even when repeated to them, unintelligible in many instances. Further reliance, moreover, may be placed in them when it is remembered that this collection was gathered more than thirty years ago, at a time when education and European influence was not so widely felt as is the case now. Again, the field of inquiry wherein the present writer has sought for widespread verification of each and all of these sayings is not even that in which they were originally collected. The dense Ashanti forest north of Coomassie must have been a *terra incognita* to the white man in those days, and it is here the writer's lot is cast. It is difficult to realize that it is little more than a decade since the first European resident came to Coomassie. These people, the true Ashantis of the forest country, present the anthropologist with a peculiarly interesting and hitherto perhaps neglected task. The general idea would seem to be that this is a field of research that is so well trodden by alien feet as to offer little chance or opportunity of retracing thereon the tracks left by the original husbandmen. They have been described by Ellis, and Bowdich, and Cruikshank, some will say. They have been contaminated (for to the anthropologist all civilization affecting his 'pet' people or tribe is contamination) by centuries of civilization, French, Portuguese, Dutch, and English. But in arguing thus, are they not being confused in the popular mind with the natives of the Gold Coast, with whom, it is true, they are politically one? It is further contended that they must be very far removed from that pristine state which would entitle them to be called a 'primitive' or perhaps even a 'barbaric' people. A casual acquaintance with them, which is the most that a person can ever hope to have, who does not speak their tongue,

will show that they had a more or less elaborate and highly developed system of government, that they were armed with guns, and that they wore clothes. These indications of European influence that have filtered through from the Coast Belt proper, from which region, as already suggested, Europe seems to have derived most of its ideas of the Gold Coast native, are in reality little more than the thinnest of thin veneer. Old and time immemorial customs and beliefs lie here very close to the surface and even at times right on the top. The investigator needs only to have that colloquial knowledge of the language which alone is the 'Open, Sesame' to the native heart and mind.

Mention has been made of the Ashanti forest; this has not only served these people as a natural stronghold against their enemies (and incidentally perhaps given them a reputation as warriors which they might not otherwise have gained) but has also reared itself as a barrier against culture and influence from without. In remote forest villages, where generation after generation must have lived and died, and carried on custom and tradition from some very distant period,¹ the faint echo of the outside world is barely felt, or heard, or heeded. Moreover it must always be remembered in dealing with signs of European influence among the Ashantis that any such influence has not, in the past, been acquired by direct contact with a race that had settled and conquered among them (as is the record of Coast civilization), but rather that the foreign elements in their social system had been voluntarily adopted by themselves as conquerors, rather than as conquered. A few words may also be said about 'the high gods' or God of these people, the *Onyàmé*, or *Nyankõpon*, that figures in so many of the sayings which follow. That He is *not* a product of missionary influence, as Ellis would have us believe,² the present writer is absolutely convinced. The

¹ The writer has dug up neolithic axe-heads in and near many Ashanti villages. Vide paper on the Ejura celts by Professor H. Balfour in October 1912, *Journal of African Society*.

² Vide *The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, chap. iii.

late Major Ellis, with all due acknowledgement to his great ability in this field of research had not, as far as can be judged from his writings, even a pretension to be an accomplished linguist in the Tŵi or Ashanti language, and must have relied for much of his information on his interpreters. Again, he was dealing with a people who had been under the influence of civilization for hundreds of years, and must have so continually been confronted with evidences of this contact that he would be perhaps all too ready to class as exotic the faintest suspicion of any similarity in the native customs and beliefs to those of the European with whom they had so long been in direct communion.

What the present writer has found to be the case with regard to most of these sayings, namely that they appear known to the *old* Ashanti men and women, and strange or unknown among the *young* and civilized community, he has also found to be the case with reference to all inquiries concerning their belief in a Supreme Being. The most (as one would suppose) bigoted and adverse to all Christian influence will be the fetish priests and the old people, who are content to live their lives in the remote 'bush' villages, not mingling with, or caring about, the new world which is awaking for the younger generation; but it is this very class, among whom the writer has many real friends, who are surprised if one questions their right to possess and have possessed their own High God; yet this belief in a Supreme Being marches side by side with that mode of thought in which mankind, the beasts, and, to their mind, *animate* nature, are all very much akin. That the present religion (using that word even in the wide sense of Taylor's 'minimum definition') of these people, which is known by that much misleading term 'fetish worship', is a degenerate form of some much higher cult, perhaps even monotheistic, seems to be indicated.

These few words the present writer has felt in duty bound to say, lest the reader, astonished at the words of wisdom which are now to follow, refuse to credit that a 'savage' or 'primitive' people could possibly have

possessed the rude philosophers, theologians, moralists, naturalists, and even, it will be seen, philologists, which many of these proverbs prove them to have had among them.

These sayings would seem to be, to the writer, the very soul of this people, as of a truth all such sayings really are. They contain some thought which, when one, more eloquent in the tribe than another, has expressed in words, all who are of that people recognize at once as something which *they* knew full well already, which all the instinct of their lives and thoughts and traditions tells them to be true to their own nature.

In most cases these sayings explain themselves. Perhaps one man will give one interpretation, one another, even in the same tribe. One of another race will almost certainly give yet a third; but, as the Ashantis themselves say, 'The traveller who returns from a journey may tell all he has seen, but he cannot explain all'.

The writer is much indebted to His Excellency Sir Hugh Clifford, K.C.M.G., Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Gold Coast Colony, for his recommendation that a subvention should be granted to assist in the publication of the present work, and also for the kindly interest and encouragement which he has so courteously shown its compiler. This is the second occasion on which the Colonial Government has by most generous grants assisted in the publication of the writer's works, and he again has the honour to thank the head of that Government, the Secretary of State for the Colonies for his most generous recognition and encouragement of students of West African linguistics and folk-lore.

Grateful acknowledgements are also due to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, who have once more laid its compiler under a deep obligation to them.

The writer's sincere thanks are given to Mr. A. C. Madan, Student of Christ Church, Oxford, who has undertaken the revision of all the proofs and has, in the absence of the writer in Africa, seen the work through the press. His thanks are also due to Mr. Samuel Kwafo of Mampon, West Africa, who has given him much help with regard to the language and customs of his people, the Ashantis.

R. S. R.

July 7, 1914.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	PAGE 3
AUTHOR'S NOTE	7

CHAPTER I

A Belief in a Supreme Being, <i>Onyàmé</i> , <i>Nyankõpon</i> , Animism, Fatalism, Minor Deities and Charms, Tutelary Deities, Fetishism and Fetish Priests, Manes, Ghosts, The Soul, Death and Burial, Evil Spirits, Witches and Wizards, Soothsayers and Medicine Men	17
---	----

CHAPTER II

Wild Animals, &c. : The Monkey, Elephant, Lion, Leopard, Antelope, Crocodile, Crab, Otter, Porcupine, Tortoise, Lizard, Snail, Snake	54
--	----

CHAPTER III

Insects : The Spider, Fly, Ants	73
---	----

CHAPTER IV

Birds : The Hen and Cock, Vulture, Hawk, Parrot, Birds in general	79
--	----

CHAPTER V

Domestic Animals : The Dog, Cat, Sheep, Goats, Cattle and Horses	87
---	----

CHAPTER VI

Mice, Rats, Animals the names of which are not specially mentioned	93
---	----

CHAPTER VII

War, Fighting, Hunting, Guns, and Weapons	95
---	----

CHAPTER VIII

Childhood, Youth and Inexperience, Age and Experience	101
---	-----

	PAGE
CHAPTER IX	
Chiefs, Free-men and the Nobility, Slaves, The Family, Nationality, Parents and Relations, Women and Wives, Marriage, Birth	114
CHAPTER X	
Strangers, Europeans and Europe	142
CHAPTER XI	
Hunger, Sickness, Medicine, Fear, Hatred, and Friendship .	146
CHAPTER XII	
Folly and Wisdom, Truth and Falschood, Poverty and Riches	152
CHAPTER XIII	
Fire, Water, Rivers, Rain	165
CHAPTER XIV	
General Precepts and Maxims	171

CHAPTER I

A BELIEF IN A SUPREME BEING, ONYÀMÉ, NYANKŌPOŃ, ANIMISM, FATALISM, MINOR DEITIES AND CHARMS, TUTELARY DEITIES, FETISHISM AND FETISH PRIESTS, MANES AND GHOSTS, THE SOUL, DEATH AND BURIAL, EVIL SPIRITS, WITCHES AND WIZARDS, SOOTHSAYERS AND MEDICINE MEN.

1. *Asase terew, na Onyàmé ne panyin.* (2787)

Of all the wide earth, the Supreme Being is the elder.

Asase. Deriv. possibly *ase*, down, beneath, as opposed to *osoro*, above, the heavens (*asase* reduplication of *ase*). Here means the world, the earth, which is also expressed by *ĩyase* = *oĩa ase*, under the sun; *oĩa* being again derived from root *ĩi*, seen in *ĩim* = *ĩi-mu*, in the firmament.

Terew. May be either taken as an adjective, or, if the pronoun *e* is understood, as a verb, 'is wide'.

Na. This particle can often be rendered by the conjunction 'and', but is often used to give emphasis to a word or clause.

Onyàmé. The late Major Ellis in his *The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, writes as follows: 'Within the last twenty or thirty years the German missionaries, sent out from time to time by the mission societies of Basel and Bremen, have made Nyankupon known to European ethnologists and students of the science of religion, but being unaware of the real origin of this god, they have generally written and spoken of him as a conception of the native mind, whereas he is really a god borrowed from Europeans and only thinly disguised. . . To the negro of the Gold Coast, Nyankupon is a material and tangible being, possessing legs, body, arms, in fact all the limits and the senses and faculties of man. . . For this reason no sacrifice was offered to him. . . There were no priests for Nyankupon . . . consequently no form of worship for Nyankupon was established. . . All the rites and practices peculiar to the worship of each deity had the sanction of years of tradition and custom, and it could not be expected that the people would be able to initiate new rites for a new deity. . . There were no priests for Nyankupon. . .'

Though perhaps scarcely within the scope of the present work,

the writer can hardly allow these statements to remain unchallenged, as careful research has seemed to him so totally to disprove them. Now the first credentials the present writer would ask of any one who was advancing an opinion, as the result of independent research into native customs and beliefs such as this, would be the state of proficiency that the investigator had acquired in the language of the people whose religion and beliefs he was attempting to reveal.

The standard he would ask would be a high one. Had the investigator real colloquial knowledge of the language of the people whose inner soul he was endeavouring to lay bare? Such a knowledge as is gained only after years of arduous study and close intercourse, a knowledge that will enable the possessor to exchange jokes and quips and current slang, and to join in a discourse in which some dozen voices are all yelling at once. Such a knowledge of a language is a very different thing from an academic acquaintance with it, which might fit the possessor to write an excellent grammar, dictionary, or some such treatise.

Judged by such a standard the late Major Ellis must have been found wanting.

Perhaps the person most nearly approaching to this standard was one of those very 'German Missionaries' whose evidence is so lightly brushed aside, the late Rev. J. G. Christaller. This missionary pioneer, to judge from his works and local reputation, must have possessed a knowledge of this language and an insight into the minds of the Twi or Ashanti people that has possibly never been surpassed.

Evidence from missionary sources is, however, rather unfairly, the present writer thinks, somewhat discounted, at any rate where questions of religion are at issue. Such being the case the following brief notes, coming from one who has for several years studied this language and people, and who perhaps holds that the unseen and unknown are unknown and unknowable, may be worthy of some little attention as likely to be an unbiased report.

The following titles are used by the Ashantis to designate some power generally considered non-anthropomorphic, which has its abode in the sky (which by metonymy is sometimes called after it).

The derivations given are those generally assigned by the natives themselves, but these cannot be absolutely guaranteed, as the correct ones. While entirely disagreeing with the theory

that this 'High God' is the product of European (i. e. Dutch, Portuguese, or English) influence *from the South, i. e. the Coast*, it is of course possible that it may trace its origin from a much remoter age and a wholly different influence. The Ashantis who came from the North, may have been influenced by the teachings of Mohammedans, and this 'Supreme Being', Onyankōpōn, Onyàmé, or whatever title he be known by, be not 'the thinly disguised' Jehovah of the Christians, but the Allah (which name was itself that of a famous 'fetish') of the Mohammedans. But even this extension of some hundreds of years to the life of this 'High God' would hardly, in the writer's opinion, give him time to have become such a deeply-rooted part, the very centre in fact, of the religion of the Ashantis.

The names then of this High God, Supreme Being, God, Creator, or whatever title we choose to assign to him, are :

1. *Onyàmé*. Deriv. given by natives, *onyā*, to get, and *mě*, to be full, satiated, (by metonymy the sky, which is looked on as his abode).

2. *Onyankōpōn*. The derivation of this word as *Onyàmé-nkō-pōn* (Onyàmé, alone, great one) seems borne out by noting the word in the Akyem dialect, where it is *Onyan-koro-pōn*, (Onyàmé, one, great).

3. *Tweaduampōn*. The derivation of this is almost certainly *twere-dua-ampōn* (lean on a tree and not fall).

4. *Bore-Bore*. Derivation *bō ade*, *bō ade* (make things, make things), Creator.

5. *Otumfo*. *Tumi*, power, to be able, and *fo* the personal suffix.

6. *Onyankōpōn Kwame*. That Onyankōpōn who was born on Saturday, or came into existence on a Saturday.

7. *Odōmañkōmā*. Deriv. unknown, but the word is used somewhat as the equivalent of 'inventor'.

8. *Ananse kokörko*. The Great Spider, see note on No. 175 on *ananse*.

In Ashanti, in remote bush villages, buried away in the impenetrable forest, and as yet even untouched by European and missionary influence, it would seem incredible that the Christian idea of a one and Supreme Being should, if a foreign element of only some two or three hundred years' growth, have taken such deep root as to affect their folk-lore, traditions, customs, and the very sayings and proverbs with which the language abounds. These proverbs and traditions, moreover, which speak of and contain

references to a Supreme Being, are far more commonly known among the greybeards, elders, and the fetish priestly class themselves than among the rising younger generation, grown up among new influences and often trained in the very precincts of a mission. Fetishism and monotheism would at first sight appear the very antithesis of each other, but a careful investigation of facts will show that here in Ashanti it is not so.

The religion of these people has been shrouded in misunderstanding and obscurity, much of which has been caused no doubt by the name with which it has been stamped and branded, 'fetishism' (Portuguese *feitico*, French *fétiche*, from Latin *facere*). This name conjures up a picture of the worship of stocks and stones and hideous idols, yet minute inquiry will serve to show that the underlying idea in these is almost monotheistic in its conception (see notes on No. 17, under *obosom*). It may even have once been entirely so, if any reliance can be placed on the following myth which is universally known among the older people.

Yen tete abere so no Onyankõpon wo fam anase oben yen korã. Sã bere no nso aberewa bi rewo fufũ na woma a ode rewo no kopem Onyankõpon. Na Onyankõpon kã kyere aberewa no sé, 'Adenti nã woreye me sã yi? Senea waye nti metwẽ makõ soro', na ampa ara Onyankõpon. Twẽ kõ soro.

'Long, long ago Onyankõpon lived on earth, or at least was very near to us. Now there was a certain old woman who used to pound her *fufũ* (mashed yams, &c.) and the pestle (lit. the child of the mortar, as the Ashanti word means) used to constantly knock up against Onyankõpon (who was not then high up in the sky). So Onyankõpon said to the old woman, "Why do you always do so to me? Because of what you are doing I am going to take myself away up in the sky". And of a truth he did so.' (Lit. translation of above.)

The myth goes on to relate how the people tried to follow him and bring him back.

Na afei, a nnipa ntumi mmen Onyankõpon bio, aberewa no kã kyeree ne mmanom rhĩnã se' monfifefice iwaduru pĩ mera na momfa ntoatoa so ñkõ soro nkosi se ebeto Onyankõpon.

Na ampa ara ne mmanom no yee no sã, na wode awaduru pĩ toatoa so, a ekaa bākĩ pe na adu Onyankõpon; na nso bākõ a aka no, wonnyã bi nti, won nana no, anase aberewa no, kã kyeree ne mma no se, 'Monyi nã ewo ase no, na momfa ñkõkye soro de no mã

ennu'. Na ne mma no yii owaduru no pe na ihĩnā perew guu fam, a ekum nnipa pi.

'But now, since people could no longer approach near to Onyankōpōñ, that old woman told all her children to search for all the mortars they could find and bring them, and pile one on top of another, till they reached to where Onyankōpōñ was. And so her children did so, and piled up many mortars, one on top of another, till there remained but one to reach to Onyankōpōñ. Now, since they could not get the one required anywhere, their grandmother, that is the old woman, told her children, saying, "Take one out from the bottom and put it on top to make them reach". So her children removed a single one, and all rolled and fell to the ground, causing the death of many people.' (Many other legends could be given, and the writer hopes to give a selection in some future work on the folk-lore of these people, the present volume being hardly the place for them.)

To say, as the paragraph already quoted does, 'that there were no priests for Onyankōpōñ . . . consequently no form of worship was established . . . no sacrifice was offered him', would seem to point to the fact that the writer must have been unaware of the very root idea underlying the supposed power of, and the rites performed in propitiation of, every fetish or minor deity. So closely connected are the two, a Supreme Being on the one hand, and the cult of the hundreds of fetishes and minor deities on the other, right down to the *sumani* (see note on No. 17, *obosom*) in its lowest form, where it becomes the charm or talisman, that it is necessary to repeat here, in writing of Onyankōpōñ, much that is written later under the heading of 'fetish'. The connexion between a Supreme Being and a hideous blood-smeared idol or basin of bones, blood, and fowls' feathers seems remote, but they are really very near akin. Ask any fetish priest, whom you have persuaded to allow you to visit the *body* of the particular spirit, i. e. fetish, of whom he is the custodian, (the *body*, mark you, for what *you* see as a wooden image or a mound of mud daubed with blood is exactly such to the *fetish priest*, save perhaps for the added awe or sanctity as having been in the past and being the possible future, *not* necessarily present, abode of a spirit),—ask him what his fetish really is, and whence it came, and from what source comes its power. And this is what he will tell you.

His *obosom*, or it may be *sumani* (see note on *obosom*, No. 17),

let us suppose for the sake of example, is a newly-captured deity, (the number of fetishes are probably being added to daily). He will tell you how it was sent by Onyankõpõn or Onyàmé in a blinding flash of lightning, how he caught it and shut it in a gourd till he had prepared an acceptable dwelling for it, and let it get used to its new surroundings (just as one keeps a dog chained up perhaps for a day or so when taken away from his master, to a new home). If you ask what the 'it' is he captured, he cannot tell, but will probably say vaguely '*Onyankõpõn tumi*', or '*honhon*', that is, 'the power, spirit, or *mana* of Onyankõpõn'. And this is the supposed origin of every fetish; they come from, and have their power only as part of the power ascribed to, Onyankõpõn. He is too remote and too powerful to directly have dealings with mankind, but he distributes for their benefit a little of his power, and this spirit or *mana* or power is what is called down by servants specially trained to know its needs and tastes, and having found a faithful priest, and a temporary dwelling on earth, consents at times to live there, and be the intermediary between man and the Supreme Being, from whom it comes and of whom it is a part. This is what a fetish really is. It must be clearly understood, however, that the attributes we ascribe to God are wanting entirely from the native conception of Onyàmé; he cares nothing for morals, and there is no sign that any retribution follows for a good or misspent life, though the departed spirits of persons who have lived on earth would seem to return to Onyankõpõn to render some account before being allowed to enter the spirit world below, *asaman* (see No. 34, *osaman*). Hence the expression *waye Onyankõpõn de*, he or she has become Onyankõpõn's, never *obosom de* which would have no meaning to the native mind.

It is thus seen that, indirectly, every fetish priest is a priest of Onyankõpõn; but direct service is also rendered. In every village in Ashanti may be seen a tree or stick terminating in three forks, which form a stand on which a pot or gourd is set. The name of this stick is *Onyàmé dua*, Onyàmé's tree. In the pot, dish, or gourd, are placed offerings for Onyàmé. Again, a fetish priest will not infrequently appeal directly to Onyàmé to give increased power to his fetish. The very name for a fetish, one that is often given, would also seem to prove its origin, *Onyankõpõn okyeame*, the mouthpiece of Onyankõpõn (see note on No. 481, *omãmpãm*).

On the occasion of the installation of a new chief, a ceremony

not likely to be readily influenced or changed because of contact with European influence, one part of the ceremonial consists in all the women and girls of the new chief's family parading the town or village and singing :

‘ *Osee / yei !* ’

‘ *Yei !* ’

‘ *Tweaduampon̄ e e e* ’

‘ *Yedase ō !* ’

‘ *Ameñ* ’.

Osee, (*bo ose*) is to ‘shout’. Hence perhaps we can translate thus :

‘ Hurrah, yei ! ’

‘ Yei ! ’

‘ Supreme Being e e e ! ’

‘ We thank you (lit. We lie down at your feet. See note on No. 712).

‘ You who appeared on a Saturday.’

One can readily imagine the casual student discarding the above with scorn on coming to the last word ‘*ameñ*’ which, were he not well versed in the Ashanti language, he would be excused in thinking to be the Heb. *āmēn*, and the whole song would at once become stamped as having a Christian origin.

Ameñ, or *Ameñe*, is, however, pure Akuapem and Ashanti, and is derived from *Memeneda*, Saturday, and refers to the belief that Onyankōpōn̄ came into existence on that day. Again, every Ashanti man and woman knows that he or she has a direct appeal to Onyankōpōn̄, not necessarily through the fetish priest, as would be the procedure were the fetish being appealed to. This is a well-known saying, *Obi kwan̄ nsi* (or *ntwa*) *obi kwan̄ mu*, ‘No man’s path crosses another man’s path’, and here, although there is no direct mention of the Supreme Being, the universal interpretation of the saying given is, that ‘every one has a direct appeal to Onyankōpōn̄’. See also note on *twa*, No. 507, where the fact that the name of the Supreme Being is among the words used by the drummers is noted.

Ne. This particle or verb seems to give to the noun in apposition with its subject a certain definiteness which almost supplies the want of the English definite article (not found in the Ashanti language). *Onyàmé ne panyin̄*, The Supreme Being is the elder, not an elder, which would be expressed by the verb *ye*.

Panyin̄. Deriv. *nyin̄*, to grow up (the word used for ‘to reach

puberty'), and *apã*, old, long lived. The word is used in various senses, e. g. one who is full of the wisdom of years of experience, and as a term of respect. The Chief Commissioner is the *Oboroni Panyin*.

2. *Wope akã asem akyere Onyankõpon a, kã kyere mframa.* (2656)
If you wish to tell anything to the Supreme Being, tell it to the winds.

Wope. *Pe*, to wish or to want. This verb is either followed by the subjunctive as here, *akã*, *akyere*, or by the conjunction *se*, and the verb preceded by the pronoun.

Onyankõpon. See note on *Onyàmé* above, No. 1.

Mframa. Deriv. perhaps *fra*, to mix, to stir up.

3. *Obi ñkyere abofra onyàmé.* (227)
No one shows a child the sky.

Onyàmé. Here the sky, the abode of the Supreme Being. Little children who lie sprawling on their backs looking up to the sky do not need to have it pointed out to them, for they see it better than their elders. There is a rendering of this saying which one might be tempted to read into it, and which it may even possess, but as all the greybeards the writer has questioned do not see it in that light attention is merely directed to it, this is, 'No one shows a child (points out) the Supreme Being, instinct tells him He exists' (but cf. No. 7).

4. *Obi ñkyere otomfo ba atono ; onim atono a, Onyàmé na okyeree no.* (234)

No one instructs the son of a smith how to forge ; if he knows how to forge, it is the Supreme Being taught him.

Otomfo. A smith's anvil and tools are supposed to possess some peculiar power, and a smith's family will take an oath on them, and fowls are also killed and the blood sprinkled on the anvil. For suffix *fo*, see note on No. 78, *kontromfĩ*.

Na. See note above on No. 1, *na*.

Okyeree. Past tense, seen in the lengthening of final vowel.

5. *Onyankõpon ammã asonomjõa katakyi biribi a, omã no ahõdannan.* (2547)

If the Supreme Being gave the swallow nothing else, He gave it swiftness in turning.

Asonomfõa. Also *asõmfõnã*. *Katak̄yi*, a bold or brave person; here a nick-name for the swallow.

Omãã. Past tense. *Ammã* is perfect.

Ahõdannañ. Deriv. *hõ*, and *dannañ*, reduplication of *dai*, lit. self-turning.

6. *Osansa se*, 'Ade a *Onyàmé aye ñhĩna ye*'. (2777)

The hawk (poised aloft) says, 'All things that the Supreme Being made are beautiful (good)'.

Aye. Perfect tense.

7. *Me a meda ayannya minhũ Onyankõpõñ, na wo a wubutuw hõ!* (2023)

I, who lie on my back looking upwards, do not see the Supreme Being, so what do you expect who are sprawling there on your belly!

Cf. No. 3, but in this case the Supreme Being is distinctly named and meant and not his abode, the sky, as in the other saying.

Ayannya. Deriv. *yam*, the belly, and *agya*, the side opposite, i.e. the back.

8. *Onyankõpõñ mpe asemmone, nti na okye diñ mmiakõ-mmiakõ*. (2548)
Because the Supreme Being did not wish any bad words, He gave a name to each thing, one by one.

Asemmone. *Asem-bone*, the *b* is elided and the consonant doubled. *Nti* = *eno nti*.

See the myth under note on *kontromfĩ*, No. 78.

9. *Onyàmé ñkrabea nni kwatibea*. (2538)

The destiny the Supreme Being has assigned to you cannot be avoided.

Nkrabea. Deriv. *okra*, soul, and *bea*, place or manner; hence, destiny. The present writer has not seen it mentioned in the works of any previous writers on the natives of the Gold Coast that these natives, the Ashantis, are just as much believers in Kismet as a Mohammedan. The following seems the idea generally held. Each human being's destiny is preordained and the spirit sets out to enter its mother's womb already knowing its destiny. This has been given it by Onyankõpõñ, as the legend given later shows, and is known to no one else, though it may perhaps be

ascertained by consulting the fetish priest. The word *okra* may be the same root as *kra*, to bid good-bye to. There is a well-known saying, *W'okra Onyankōpōn a, obi nnyina hɔ*, 'When you take leave of the Supreme Being, no one stands by'. Where exactly this *okra* or soul comes from, when about to be *reborn* (for the idea of reincarnation is widely known and believed), is not quite clear. It would seem, however, to have come from *asaman*, the spirit world, a replica *below* the earth of the world we now live in (see note on No. 34 under *osaman*). The reincarnated soul then takes its way to this world with its destiny already arranged. It is thought possible, however, for a man's destined hour of death to be cut short by an accident, which somewhat contradictory idea of the original Kismet is, however, modified by the prevalent idea that any one who has thus been taken off before his appointed hour will not be received back again either into the *asaman*, or underworld, or by Onyankōpōn, to whom the *okra* may perhaps first have to pass. Hence the saying: *Onyàmé ayi no, asamanfo ayi no*, 'The Supreme Being has driven him out, the spirit folk have driven him out'. This is said of a ghost which is constantly being seen. Such a ghost will eventually, after its destined time on earth has run, disappear, having gone to the world of the spirits, and such a ghost is not quite the same as *osaman-twen-twen* (q. v. No. 34, *osaman*). There seems a distinct difference between the *okra* and the *osaman*. The latter can correctly be described by the word ghost or spirit. As long as a man is alive, his *okra* and how it is regarded is more or less clearly defined, but what exactly becomes of it after death according to the native idea cannot be clearly traced. There is nothing, let it be clearly understood, of spiritual or moral well-being attached to it. It is rather the bearer of luck, good or bad (see note on soul washing, No. 147, *nni asumguarede*).

This word *okra* is also a common name for the cat (see note on No. 122, *agyinamo*) and also means a slave destined to be buried with his master at death, which word and signification perhaps helps to throw some light on its meaning.

The legend about destiny referred to above is as follows. *Onyankōpōn* gave a soul which was setting out for earth two bundles, a large and a slightly smaller one. The soul was told to hand over one of the parcels, the larger, to another soul which it would find on reaching the earth. The soul to whom these destiny parcels were given changed them, taking as its own the one it had

been ordered to give up to another. On coming to the world the soul, now an incarnated one, found its parcel contained only rubbish, whereas the one (the wrong one) it had handed over to the other soul, contained nuggets and gold dust. In other words, the destiny of one was poverty, while the other was born a rich man. Nor does the story end here, for when the person died and returned to *Onyanköpon* and complained of the fate that had been assigned to it in life, *Onyanköpon* blamed it for having changed these destinies, its own and that of another entrusted to it. This myth is of value as showing that the *okra* is supposed to come from *Onyanköpon* before the person is born and returns to him after death.

Nni. Neg. of *wo*.

Kwatibea. *Kwati*, to do without, to avoid, and *bea*.

10. *Asem a Onyàmé adi asie no, oteasefo nnañ no.* (2855)

The fate (lit. words) that the Supreme Being has beforehand ordained, a human being does not alter.

Adi asie. *Di asem sie*, is 'to speak words beforehand'. Note this idiomatic use of *sie*, to prepare, to express the idea of a thing being done in readiness or beforehand.

Oteasefo. A person, lit. one who lives down, i.e. on earth.

11. *Onyanköpon ñkum wo na odasāñi (oteasefo) kum wo, wuñwu.* (2546)

If the Supreme Being does not kill you but a human being kills you, you do not die.

The idea underlying this saying is perhaps explained by the belief noted above (No. 9), that should a person meet his death before the time prearranged for him his spirit continues to haunt this world till his allotted span is full, after which it has permission to depart to the spirit world. Again, it may simply mean to exemplify the impossibility of a man avoiding his destiny; and 'but a human being kills you' may mean 'tries to kill you', when he fails to be able to do so, as *Onyanköpon* had not yet ordained it.

12. *Onyanköpon hye wo nsā kora mā na oteasefo kã gu a, ohyia wo so bio.* (2545)

When the Supreme Being fills your gourd cup full of wine and a human being (comes and) pours it away, He will fill it up again for you.

13. *Onyàmé mǎ wo yare a, omǎ wo aduru.* (2540)

If the Supreme Being gives you sickness, He (also) gives you medicine.

Aduru. Perhaps from root *dua*, a tree, herb, leaf, medicine good or bad (poison). *Tõ aduru*, to poison. *Atuduru* = *atuo-aduru*, i. e. gun medicine, gunpowder.

14. *Onyàmé na owò basiñ fufu mǎ no.* (2541)

It is the Supreme Being who pounds the *fufu* for the one without arms.

Na. Here emphatic, see note on No. 1.

Owò. *Wò* or *wow*, to pound in a mortar (*owòaduru*) with a pestle (*owomma* = *owò ba*, 'child of the pounding').

Basiñ. Deriv. *basá*, arm, and *siñ*, a fragment or part of anything.

Fufu. Deriv. *fu*, white. *Fufu* is the staple food of the Ashantis (the *nsima* of the Maianja), yam or plantain pounded (first boiled), rolled into balls, and eaten with relish, meat or fish.

Mǎ. Translated by the preposition 'for', but really a verb, 'to give'. The language is entirely lacking in prepositions, the place of which are taken by verbs.

15. *Nniipa ihĩnā ye Onyàmé mma, obi nye asase ba.* (2436)

All men are the children of the Supreme Being, no one is a child of the earth.

16. *Odõmañkõmǎ bọ owu mǎ owu kum no.* (964)

The Creator created death (only) for death to kill Him.

Odõmañkõmǎ. See note on No. 1, *Onyàmé*.

Owu. Death is personified among the Ashantis as a skeleton, a skull with empty eye-sockets *but having ears attached*. (Hence attempts to bluff death as exemplified in Proverbs Nos. 59 and 60.)

This saying illustrates in a wonderfully epigrammatic manner the power of death.

17. *Obosom a onniĩ guan da, ohĩ guan aniwam' mpě a, ose, 'Eye srade'.* (615)

The fetish that has never had a sheep given to it, when it sees even the matter in the corner of a sheep's eye, says 'It is a fat one'.

Obosom. Commonly called a 'fetish' (Portuguese *feitiço*, French

fétiche, both from Latin *facere*, as already noted, p. 20). The derivation is very doubtful, a possible one being *obo*, a rock or stone, and *som*, to serve.

The word is generally applied by Europeans to the habitation of the 'fetish'. This may be anything from a wooden idol to a mountain or a river. A 'fetish' is a spirit or 'power' (*tūmi*) which has its origin from Onyankōpon (see note on No. 1, *Onyàmê*). Fetishes are of various degrees of importance, some of merely local repute, others e. g. *Tanno* (q. v. No. 55) and *Krakyè Dente* (see No. 73), widely known. Famous 'fetishes', such as these two named, may have branch abodes in many villages, the priests of which are subservient to the high priest at the head-quarters of that particular cult. A fetish is not necessarily always occupying the abode, natural or artificial, which it is supposed to favour as its habitation.

It only comes and enters that abode when called by the priest, by the tinkling of bells and by his gyrations in the ceremonial dance. When thus summoned it will temporarily occupy the body prepared and made acceptable for it. It may even come and rest there of its own accord, but for all intents and purposes a fetish image, or rock, or tree, is nothing but an image, rock, or tree, till the priest, who is *en rapport* with the power or spirit which is known to have adopted one of these places as its abode, calls on it to come and enter it. Thus a 'fetish' cannot be stolen or die. An *odum* tree may fall down which was sacred as the known abode of this power. When that happens all it means is that the spirit or power will go elsewhere. So in war, if a fetish *body* (abode) is captured, that does not mean the fetish is captured. It is temporarily lost, no doubt, but its own priests may be able to make an acceptable home for it once more.

It must be clearly understood that a 'fetish' is not a spirit of one who has died, and their cult must not be confused with a form of manes-worship or propitiation which also exists. The writer only knows of one case where confusion might arise, where the spirit of a dead man is supposed to have entered a tree. At Abenne, in Kwau, the spirit of a chief, Mampon Adai, who is said not to have died, but simply to have disappeared, 'entered a tree' which for long after had offerings placed near it. In almost every case, however, where similar offerings are placed at the foot of a tree, one would be correct in supposing it was for a 'fetish' and not for a spirit of one departed this life, nor has the writer found

any trace of a preanimistic conception or animatism. (Spirits of the dead are of course summoned and propitiated; see notes on No. 35, *osaman*, and No. 388, *akoinua*.)

It has been noted that some 'fetishes', owing to the greater ability of their priests, no doubt, take precedence over others. There would also appear to be a lower grade, with more local, family, or even individual interests, which are known as *suman*. A *suman* may mean anything from a power, having as its abode some image,—undistinguishable often from that occupied by a fetish—to a little charm bound on ankle or wrist to bring luck to the wearer alone. A *suman* would seem to derive its power from the *abosom*, just as the *obosom* in turn gains its own from *Onyanköpon*. Thus we have the whole code of belief of these natives summed up as follows:

1. *Onyàmé*. A Supreme Being (see No. 1).
2. *Abosom*. 'Fetishes', i. e. spirit, power, *mana* from or of the Supreme Being.
3. *Suman*. Minor deities, deriving their power from the *abosom*.
4. *Suman*. Amulets or charms, a lower grade of the above (3).
5. *Asaman*. A spirit world, inhabited by *asamanfo* spirits (see note on No. 34, *osaman*).
6. *Bayifo*. Witches and wizards, human vampires (see No. 56).
7. *Bonsam*. Monsters, half human, half devil (see note on No. 56, *sasabonsám*).

'Fetishes' are literally, 'in thousands', as witness the common toast or incantation as the Ashanti man pours out a few drops of wine,—*Abosonpem monsá*, 'Thousand fetishes, your wine'.

The writer will only name a few that are served in his own district.

Many are followers of *Tanno* and *Krakye Dente*, *Mpra*, *Apeā*, *Botoku*, *Ateko*, *Tanno-Konkroma* (a conjunction of two fetishes), *Kompi*, *Obofiri*.

The local fetish at Ejura (Edwira, a plant, as the name really should be spelled), besides a branch of *Dente*, is *Tanno Konkroma*.

There is also (at Ejura) a belief that the spirit of a former chief at Ejura entered a large bull elephant which still haunts the neighbourhood, and is known by having within the imprint of one of its feet the imprint also of the foot of a man. This shows that

belief in transmigration is not unknown, though this is the only case met with by the writer.

Onni. Neg. of *wɔ*. Note form of past tense, made by lengthening of final vowel.

Guan. A generic term, embracing sheep and goats. When either is especially meant to be designated, then the words *oguanten* and *abirekyi* are respectively used.

18. *Obosom a oye nam na odi aboadé.* (616)

The fetish that is sharp (clever at predicting events) is the one that has offerings vowed to it.

Na. Emphatic (see note on No. 1).

Aboade. It is a common practice among these natives to vow offerings to their particular fetish or tutelary deity in the event of the requests which they make to it and promises given by it being fulfilled.

19. *Obosom Kyeré nantwi, womfa mfa abonten, womfa mfa afikyiri, nso ewo nea wode fá.* (617)

The fetish Kyere's cow is not taken down the street, and is not led behind the town, nevertheless a way is found to take it.

Womfa mfa. The first verb is the auxiliary and the equivalent of *de* (in a positive sentence), the second *fa* is the finite verb. Note the *de* in *wode*, where the sentence is positive.

20. *Obosom anim, woko no mperensã.* (618)

One goes before a fetish as often as one likes.

Anim. Cf. *so* in the proverb following. *Anim*, here means to go before the fetish, *of one's own accord* to consult it; *so*, implies that the power of the fetish is invoked *on* or *against* the person.

Woko no. Note the verb *ko* itself contains the idea of the preposition that has in English to be expressed by, *to*.

Mperensã. *Li* . three times, see note on No. 767.

21. *Obosom so, yenko no mperensã.* (619)

One is not taken before a fetish a great number of times.

So. See note above on *anim*, No. 20.

The meaning is, that the fetish will sooner or later kill the person who is continually being brought up before it.

22. *Abosom na ékyerè akomfo ntɔ́ahõ.* (620)

It is the fetishes who show the fetish priests how to turn when dancing.

Na. Emphatic particle, see note on No. 1.

Akomfo. *Okomfo* plur. *akomfo*; feminine, *okomfo bā*. More or less synonymous terms are *osofo*, *obosomfo*.

Okomfo is derived from *kɔm*, to prophesy, to predict, (also to dance). The *okomfo* is the priest to a 'fetish', he tends its abode and smears it with eggs and blood, to render it acceptable to the spirit, power, or *mana*, when it may be called on to come and occupy the receptacle prepared for it.

The bowl, idol, pot, stone, &c., which the fetish may be called to enter is an empty nothing till the fetish priest summons the fetish to enter it. This he does by tinkling a bell, drumming, and, most important of all, by dancing. He will know when the spirit (not that of any man or woman of course) has taken up its abode in the body provided for it by being seized with tremblings and shakings.

When this happens, he knows that the fetish has come, and is temporarily inhabiting the object which has been prepared for it. The *okomfo* then addresses the spirit and gives its answers to those who have come to consult it. The *akomfo* are very frequently women. A period of training, from two to three years, has to be undergone before a man or woman can become a custodian of a fetish. The office is not by any means a sinecure, and unpleasant results may follow for the priest or priestess should their interpretation of the fetish's words prove false.

In the writer's own district the memory is still fresh of a number of priests who were taken to see a certain chief, (the uncle of the present Sub-chief Kobina Gyimma), Atakora Kwaku, by name, and were asked to predict if he would recover from an illness he had been suffering from. Atakora Kwaku was really dead already when the priests were led in one by one and asked what must be done to cure him. They, in turn, recommended various things, till the turn of a priestess of the fetish *Nkwafea Tannɔ* came, who, on being consulted, said nothing could be done as the man was already dead. She thereby acquired great celebrity, while her confrères, who did not escape in time, were all promptly put to death.

Besides tending the fetish and his local habitation and interpret-

ing his words, the fetish priest uses and consults lots (see note on *aka*, No. 55).

Dancing is a marked feature of the cult of all fetishes. The terms *osofo* and *obosomfo*, already referred to, appear to have a slightly different signification. While the *okomfo* not only tends the bodily and spiritual welfare of his particular spirit, but also dances, and interprets its utterances, the *osofo* or *obosomfo* would seem to confine himself more to tending the fetish than to dances or prophecies. Fetish men frequently attain great power and influence, and may even come to occupy important stools, e.g. that of Aguna is to-day held by a fetish priest, or priestly king. (For notes on fetishes see No. 55, *Tanno*, and No. 73, *Krakye Dente*.)

Ekyerẽ. Note the idiomatic use of the third singular neuter pronoun *e* for the third plural personal *wo*.

23. *Obosomaketere hye ohye a, ohye*. (621)

If the fetish lizard (chameleon) is predestined to be burned, it will be burned.

Obosomaketere. Lit. the fetish lizard, the chameleon, why so called cannot be ascertained. It is worthy perhaps of note that in Mañanja folk-lore the *tonkwe-tonkwe*, or *nadzekambe*, i. e. chameleon, enters into one of their religious myths, and would also seem among the Ashantis, judging from its name, to have some similar connexion, though why or in what respect the writer has been unable to trace.

The above saying is one of those to show the unalterable decree of destiny. Cf. Nos. 9, 11, 12.

Hye ohye. The first verb is *hye*, to appoint, to fix, (*hye da*); the second is the verb *hye*, to burn.

24. *Obosomfo kã ne ñkõnim, na ẽnkã ne ñkõgu*. (624)

The fetish priest tells of his victories, but not of his defeats.




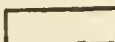
(That is, boasts of his successful prophecies, but says nothing about the unfulfilled ones.)

Obosomfo. Better in regard to context *okomfo*, q.v. No. 22.

Ñkõnim, . . . *ñkõgu*. Deriv. *kõ*, to fight, and *nim*, success; *gu*, to scatter, disperse.

25. *Eto sikyi õ, eto mfuatẽ õ, yenyã okomfo kum no*. (3285)

Whether the die falls *sikyí* or whether it falls *mfuatẽ*, we are going to kill the fetish priest.

Sikyi, mfuatê. A wooden or bone die used for consulting lots. Two opposite sides are called *sikyi* and *mfuatê*, the other two, *korosã*, marked with three cross lines , and *korosã anan*, with four cross lines . *Mfuatê* is marked with a diagonal line , *sikyi* is plain . The ends have no name and no mark.

The saying, besides exemplifying the rather precarious nature of an *okomfo*'s work (see note on *okomfo*, No. 22), is used to denote something to which there is little or no alternative.

26. *Owu de ne pasũa fa ofi mu a, obosomfo aduru dan nsu.* (3482)

When death encamps over against a household, the medicine of the fetish priest turns to water.

Owu. Death personified (see note on No. 16, *owu*).

Aduru. See note on No. 13, *aduru*.

Nsu. Note, *nsu*, water; *osu*, rain; *asu*, a stream or river, or pool.

27. *Okomfo nni ikontõro na wontõa obosonsoafo ti.* (1697)

When the fetish priest has given a false prophecy, the fetish carrier's head is not cut off.

Nni. Imperative (?) of *di*; lit. let him lie (?).

Ikontõro. *Akom*, and *atõro*, lying prophecy.

Obosonsoafo. The fetish carrier is a separate person from the fetish priest. For etymology (according to Ashantis) of suffix *fo*, see note on No. 78, *kontromfĩ*.

28. *Akomfo aduasã fĩẽ oyarefo a, vodi atoro.* (1699)

When thirty fetish priests are looking after a sick man, (some of them) are lying.

Aduasã. See note on No. 767.

29. *Sika uti, na okomfo mene agyan.* (2949)

For the sake of gold dust, the fetish priest swallows an arrow.

Agyan. Bows and arrows, except as children's toys, are now unknown among the Ashantis, though from various survivals, as this saying for instance, it would seem they were formerly their arms. (See also note on No. 522, *tafoni*.)

A variation of the above runs, *Sika . . . de ne ti pem dan*, i. e. 'knocks his head against a house'. These sayings show that the *akomfo* also combine with their other duties the art of jugglery and self-inflicted punishment. Cf. the Indian fakir.

30. *Obi ñkyere okomfo ba akom.* (229)

No one shows the child of a fetish priest how to dance.

Kom. The connexion between certain ceremonial dances and religion is here clearly seen; the word for 'to prophesy' and 'to dance' (only in connexion with a fetish ceremony, the word on an ordinary occasion being *saw*), being synonymous. Cf. the Maianja question to the stranger whose totem class one wishes to ascertain, *Wo bvina ñji?* What do you dance?

31. *Akoko wo ñkwã adurũ a, aĩkã yede no tĩa abosom soq?* (1661)

If a fowl possessed life-giving medicine, would it be taken and sacrificed over fetishes?

Yede = *Wode*.

Tĩa abosom soq. Fowls are commonly sacrificed over the images, &c., &c., in which the fetishes are, as occasion requires, summoned to come and take their temporary abode.

32. *Adurũ a efi komfo nsam' ñhĩnã ye aduru-pa.* (1044)

All the medicine (charms) that come from the hands of the fetish priest are good (real) charms.

Aduru. Here perhaps rather used as *sumani* (q.v. No. 17).

Pa. Lit. good, but also used commonly in the sense of real as opposed to imitation or worthless.

33. *Obi mfa ntĩvahõ nsisi komfo.* (169)

No one deceives a fetish priest by dancing.

Mfa, nsisi. Note this, at first sight, confusing and peculiar idiom. The literal translation would be 'One does not by dancing not deceive', a double negative, but this does not in Ashanti make a positive, the reason being that whereas in the English idiom we have two clauses, a principal and a subordinate, generally in copulative co-ordination, or a principal clause and a subordinate adverbial phrase, in Ashanti the construction really is two or more totally independent principal clauses, the subject of the first in order of speaking being understood with each of the clauses following:

e. g. No one deceives by dancing, English idiom.

One does not dance, one does not deceive, Ashanti idiom.

No one tells a man to strike and kill another. . . English idiom.

In Ashanti the construction would be: One does not tell a man, one does not strike, one does not kill another.

This has no doubt been the original full construction and is

quite in accordance with the simple rules for syntax and grammar of the language of a primitive race; in time the apparent clumsiness of the construction or the wish for abbreviation led to the dropping of the common subject, except of course with the first verb; thus the negative verbs all came to stand alone in clauses which seem subordinate (though really principal or independent short sentences) to the opening, or first clause.

Komfo. (See note on No. 22.) Dancing enters largely into the training and duties of a fetish priest, and no one not a priest is likely to be 'half as expert'.

34. *Oteasefo na omũ osamañ kɔñ do otó.* (3215)

It is the living man who causes the denizen of the spirit world to long for the mashed yam.

Oteasefo. Lit. one who lives down, i. e. on earth.

Na. Emphatic (see note on No. 1).

Osamañ. *Osamañ*, plu. *nsamañfo*. A spirit or ghost of one who has died. *Asamañ* is the spirit world below, not in the sky, which is the abode of *Onyankõpɔñ* and the other class of minor deities or powers commonly known as 'fetishes' (see note on No. 17, *ɔbosom*, and No. 1, *Onyàmé*). The *osamañ* is not a soul, which is rather *okra*, and this latter is in a man during his life on earth, though it may temporarily leave him during sleep, and even leave the body of a dying man *before* death (see note on *okra*, No. 9, under *ikrabea*). The *samañ* or ghost does not appear to have an *okra*, but this is not quite clear. A *samañ* is in the form and shape of the mortal body and has all its senses, or some at any rate, and feels hunger and thirst. It generally inhabits a spirit world *asamañ*, which is much the same as the world the native now lives in (see note on funeral and burial customs, No. 467).

Nsamañfo, ghosts, are supposed to be of three kinds:

1. *Osamañ-pa*, a good spirit.

2. *Osamañ-tweñ-tweñ*. Lit. 'a wait-about, wait-about spirit'.

3. *Otofo*. The spirit of a man killed, or who met his death by accident.

Osamañ-pa. A man may die in a village, and for long after the surviving inhabitants may continue all to live without another death occurring among them, and affairs generally may seem to prosper, either for the community, or for the family of the deceased. The spirit is then said to be a good spirit.

Osaman-tiñen-tiñen. A spirit or ghost that is seen at intervals by living persons.

To explain this class of ghosts it is necessary to recount a common belief held by the natives. They think that when a man dies his spirit does not go direct to the world below (*asaman*), but has first, as it were, to report itself (here opinions seem divided), some say to *Onyankōpon*, others say to a famous 'fetish' *Brukum*, which has its earthly habitation somewhere east of the Volta, in Togoland.

In either case the spirit is informed if it is to go to the spirit world below or to haunt the earth temporarily (as in some cases where a man is not supposed to have completed his destiny in this world, in which case he (the spirit), is told to return to its old haunts till that time is complete), or the spirit is forbidden for ever to enter the spirit world and is destined to haunt this earth of living men for ever (why, does not seem clear). Such a spirit then becomes 'a wait-about wait-about spirit' (*osaman-tiñen-tiñen*).

It does not seem to have much power for harm, and is shy generally, and confines itself to frightening people. The *saman* whose stay on earth has been only ordained to last till his destiny has been fulfilled eventually disappears to the world where all the spirits live.

Even when a spirit has gone to the lower world, it is not necessarily considered to have severed all connexion with the world of the living. Hence manes-worship is a distinct branch of the religion which is otherwise chiefly concerned in propitiating the *abosom*, 'fetishes'.

An Ashanti never drinks without pouring a few drops of the wine on the ground for the denizens of the spirit world who may happen to be about (also some for 'fetishes'). Food is constantly placed aside for them. The fetish priests often direct, in cases of illness, and such like, that offerings be made, not to the 'fetish', but to the departed spirit of a relation to whom they, the priests, with the assistance of the 'fetish', have traced the cause of illness or misfortune. The departed spirits are regularly summoned from the spirit world on certain ceremonial occasions (see No. 388, note on *akoninua*). Not only men, but animals are supposed to have certain limited powers after death (see note on No. 131, *bommofo*).

The word used for 'to haunt' is *sēsā* or *sāsā*. It must be noted

there is absolutely no trace of a belief that spirits ever go to live in the sky with *Onyankõpõn*, but as already noted there is an almost universal idea that he in some way has power over them to interdict or permit them to enter the spirit world and also to launch a soul (*okra* rather than *saman*) again into the world of men, re-incarnation in fact.

Ghosts are, curiously enough, when visible to the human eye, reported generally as being white or dressed in white. The near presence of a spirit (ghost) is supposed to be felt by its peculiar smell (see No. 38).

Kõn dõ. To long for, lust for, to love. Lit. 'to swell', of the neck. This expression, with the more euphemistic *pẽ*, to want, are the only words in the language to express the sentiment love. In this idiom we probably get near to the primitive conception of a word which only refinement and civilization has in time invested with a higher conception.

It forms one of the numerous examples in this language of expressions which, having with us a psychological or emotional connexion, are interpreted by the savage in terms purely physiological. A whole host of such expressions exist, and these idioms, among other factors, serve to make this language one of great difficulty for the European to master.

35. *Woyẽ 'me-nkõ-medi' a, wunyã osaman nhũũ*. (3571)

If you are an 'eat-by-myself' person, you will often see a spirit.

Wunyã . . . nhũũ. Note this idiom, i.e. the auxiliary verb *nyã* coupled with the verbal noun (formed by the nasal prefix), giving the idea of repeated action to the verb, here translated by 'often'.

Osaman. The original text has *asaman*, which is an error. *Osaman* is a spirit, *asaman* the spirit world. The spirits are often supposed to join the living (unseen) when the latter are eating. Cooked and hot food is supposed to get cold because of the ghostly fingers touching it.


36. *Osaman-pa hyira ne ba*. (2759)

A good spirit (ghost) looks after its child.

37. *Nsumampow mu soduru, wo nĩ wu a, wo abusũa asũ*. (2760)

Bent stick in the spirit grove, when your mother is dead that is the end of your family.

Nsumampow. Deriv. *saman*, a spirit, and *epow*, a thicket.

Soduru. A bent or hooked stick which is used for cultivating the soil. Deriv. *aso*, a hoe, and *duru*, = *dua*, stick or tree, shaped thus 

Wo nĩ wu a. Lit. when your mother dies, in this case when the parent tree, on which the hooked stick grows, is cut or falls down.

The saying is allegorical and means that when a child loses its mother it has lost the head of its family. Descent is traced through the mother, and stools, property, &c., pass, not to the son, but to brothers (see note on *abusũa* below).

Nĩ. Mother. The following are the names of various relations, in each case all those persons to whom a particular name applies being also given.

CLASSIFICATORY SYSTEM AMONG THE ASHANTI

Ashanti.	English.	All persons to whom the name may be applied.
A. <i>Enĩ</i> (plu. <i>enĩnom</i>), <i>Enĩ</i> , <i>eno</i> , and <i>awo</i> .	Mother.	(1) Own mother. (2) Mother's sister. (3) Own father's various other wives. Also sometimes used as term of respect even when no relationship exists. (See I.)
B. <i>Agya</i> , or <i>ose</i> .	Father.	(1) Own father. (2) Father's brother. (3) Term of respect not necessarily implying relationship. (See G.)
C. <i>Onĩa</i> , deriv. <i>onĩ</i> <i>wa</i> , <i>onĩ ba</i> (lit. mother's child).	Sister or Brother.	(1) Own sister or brother (<i>by same mother only</i>). (2) Own mother's sister's child. (3) Any one of the same <i>abusũa</i> family name as your own, see note below on <i>abusũa</i> . (See I in table.)
D. <i>Agya ba</i> (lit. father's child).	Half-brother or half-sister.	(1) The child of your own father by a mother not your own. (2) Father's brother's child. (See N in table.)
E. <i>Kunu</i> (<i>okunu</i>).	Husband.	(1) A woman's own husband. (2) Sister's husband. (3) Husband's brother. (4) Half-sister's husband. (See U in table.)

CLASSIFICATORY SYSTEM AMONG THE ASHANTI (*continued*)

Ashanti.	English.	All persons to whom the name may be applied.
F. <i>Oyere</i> (plu. - <i>nom</i>).	Wife.	(1) A man's own wife or wives. (2) Brother's wife. (3) Wife's sister. (4) Half-brother's wife. (See V in table.)
G. <i>Agya</i> (lit. father).	Uncle (pa- ternal).	Father's brother. (See B in table.)
H. <i>Wofa</i> .	Uncle (ma- ternal).	Mother's brother, who may succeed to stool, property, &c.
I. <i>Enũ</i> .	Aunt (ma- ternal).	Own mother's sister. (See A and M.)
<i>Osewá</i> .	Aunt (pa- ternal).	Father's sister.
J. <i>Wofasewa</i> .	Niece.	Sister's child (daughter). Note the feminine suffix <i>wa</i> .
K. <i>Wofase</i> .	Nephew.	Sister's child (son).
L. <i>Oba</i> (lit. child, son, or daughter).	Child. Niece. Nephew.	Own child, brother's child (daughter or son).
M. <i>Onũa</i> .	Cousin.	Mother's (own) sister's child. (See C and I.)
N. <i>Agya ne nũa ba</i> .	Cousin.	Father's brother's child. (See D in table.)
O. <i>Nãnã</i> (<i>Nãnã-bari-ma</i> , <i>Nãnã-bã</i>).	Grandparent.	Maternal and paternal grand- parents.
P. <i>Oba nãnã</i> .	Grandchild.	Children of son or daughter.
Q. <i>Nãnãnkãnsõ</i> (lit. 'Grandparent not touch (his) ear').	Great-grand- parent.	Maternal and paternal great- grandparents.
R. <i>Ase</i> .	Father-in- law.	(1) Wife's father. (2) Hus- band's father.
S. <i>Osew</i> .	Mother-in- law.	(1) Wife's mother. (2) Hus- band's mother.
T. <i>Akonta</i> .	Brother-in- law.	Wife's brother.
U. <i>Okunu</i> (lit. hus- band).	Brother-in- law.	Husband's brother. (See E in table.)
V. <i>Oyere</i> (<i>nũa</i>) (lit. wife).	Sister-in-law.	Wife's sister. (See F.)
W. <i>Akũmmã</i> .	Sister-in-law.	Husband's sister.

Abusũa. The following legend is common among the Ashantis to account for the derivation of this word.

They derive it from *Abu* (a proper name), and *sũa*, to imitate, the reason being given as follows. 'There lived in former times a king of Adanse who had a "linguist" named Abu. This Abu incurred the king's anger and was heavily fined. Now, at that time children used to inherit from their father. Abu asked his children to assist him to pay the fine imposed by the king, but they refused and all went off to *their mother's relatives*. But Abu's sister's children rendered him assistance to pay off his debts, and Abu, therefore, when he died left all his belongings to them. Other people then copied him and willed their property to the sister's children (*Abu-sũa*, lit. copying Abu).' (The above is a literal translation of the account given by a native.)

This is an excellent example of an aetiological myth. The Ashantis, who now notice that other nations trace descent through the father, have invented this myth to explain the fact that with them descent is traced through the mother, which now strikes them as curious.

It is amusing to notice that the inventor of this myth has not been able to entirely adapt his mental attitude even to the imaginary setting of his tale, for he quite naturally pictures the children, *under* the supposed former *father right*, running off to the *mother's relatives*. (As a matter of fact no case is known of a change from patrilineal to matrilineal descent.)

The law of succession (to stools and property and clan name) among this people is as follows:

The direct heir is (1) the eldest brother by the same mother. (2) Failing such (and he may be passed over for various reasons—incompetency, bodily blemish, &c.), the next in the direct line of succession is the eldest son of the eldest sister, (3) the grandson through the female line, (4) another branch of the same family or clan (*abusũa*), (5) a slave.

One commonly hears Europeans who have a smattering of native customary law lay it down as a hard and fast rule that the nephew, that is class (2) as above, always succeeds.

This, however, is not the case. There is even a well-known proverb to that effect—*Nĩwamma nsae a, wofase uni ade*, 'When (one's) mother's children are not finished, (one's) nephew does not inherit.'

Many of these proverbs illustrate in a remarkable manner the force and strength and unity of relationship on and through the female side, and the almost total disregard or recognition of any kinship tie on the father's side. See proverbs Nos. 37, 483, 486, 487, 488, 491, 492.

Abusũa means a family or clan name, it is always inherited through the mother. Each clan is exogamous. The classificatory system here given, which is incomplete (the writer hopes to go fully into this subject in a future work), might seem to point to a past in which a group of brothers married a group of sisters. The most important of these clans or families are as follows:

Oyoko.

Asona.

Abrade.

Agona.

Biretuo.

Asene.

Asakyinfo.

Some of these names are those of plants or animals. *Oyoko* would seem to mean red earth. Each and all may necessitate the observance of certain taboos (though perhaps another factor determines this). An example of only one will be given here. A man of the Nyado *ntoi* will not kill a leopard. Should he accidentally trap and kill one it will be carried to his village, laid on a mat, bathed by the women folk smeared with white clay, in fact all the funeral rites usually observed on the death of a human being are held over it. They also beg its pardon. It is then carried in a hammock (*apa*) and buried.

The python is sometimes treated in a similar way, as also the crocodile. Even when a man whose *ntoi*, say, does not prevent his killing a leopard, does so, and another man whose *ntoi* makes the leopard sacred happens to be near, the latter person will beg permission to take away the body and treat it as described.

The word *ntoi* has been mentioned. It does not seem that the animal specially regarded has strictly a connexion with a man's *abusũa*, i.e. the clan name he inherits from his mother, but that this special regard for an animal depends on a person's *ntoi* which is also hereditary but traced through the male line, and is not exogamous, that is, two persons of the same *ntoi* may marry, always provided the *abusũa* is not the same. The *ntoi* rather than the

abusã seems to determine the taboo. Each *ntoñ* class has its own special form of greeting (in answering a salutation).

Each taboos certain things, each necessitates a certain day for 'soul washing', and certain forms of sacrifice to accompany that ceremony. (The writer hopes to go into the whole question of totemism among these people in a future work.)

38. *Osamane ahõofwam ne nunúm.* (2762)

The smell of a ghost is the smell of the '*nunúm*' shrub.

Osamane. As *osamani* (q.v. No. 35), but in *Akyem* dialect.

Nunúm. A shrub with aromatic scented leaves.

39. *Osamani tẽ ne nsa kyia wo a, wopono wo de mu.* (2763)

When a ghost puts forth its hand to greet you, you draw your's back.

Wopono. *Pono*, lit. to bend. Hand shaking as a salutation appears to have been a native custom before the advent of Europeans. When shaking hands with a number of assembled persons the person will always commence with the one standing on his right and pass on from right to left.

40. *Osamani ñtweñ teasefo ansã-na wadidi.* (2764)

A ghost does not wait for the living to begin to eat before it begins to partake.

Teasefo. See note on No. 34.

41. *Asamani nni biribi a, ewo ñhyehye-wo-ákyi.* (2765)

If the spirit world possesses nothing else, it has at least the power of its name.

Asamani. The underworld of ghost people (see note on *osamani*, No. 35).

Ñhyehye-wo-ákyi. This saying is difficult to render literally. *Hyehye-wo-ákyi*, boast of your back, i.e. of whom or what is behind you, as for instance where a man would claim to be the subject of some powerful chief to prevent a lesser chief, into whose hands he had fallen, from killing him. So here, where applied to the spirit world, about which people do not know much, but which is held in dread, as spirits can come and haunt living men and cause them sickness and even death. So this saying is quoted of a person who makes vague allusions as to what he will do and who will avenge him if he is interfered with.

42. *Asamañ, wɔ̃ko nsañ mma.* (2767)

The spirit world is not a place one can visit and return from again (as a living man).

Wɔ̃ko, nsañ mma. For the negative see note on No. 33, *mfa, nsisi.* *Mma*, neg. of *ba*.

43. *Asamañ, wɔ̃mmāñ.* (2768)

Things cannot be sent to the spirit world (?). (Meaning obscure.)

44. *Asamantawa se enim pae a, ẽe se atawa pa.* (2769)

When the 'spirit' *tawa* tree declares it knows how to pop, at best it can hope to do so (only) like the real *tawa* tree (if as well even as that).

Asamantawa. The *tawu*, or *atā*, is a tree with large bean-like pods which when ripe burst with a bang. Three varieties are known as *tawa-pa*, the 'real' *tawa*, see note on No. 483, *papāpa tawa*, an inferior kind, and *samantawa*, a species of the same tree inferior to that again, not fit for human consumption (the seeds of the *tawa-pa* are eaten), but the inferior species are good enough for the denizens of the spirit world. The same idea is seen in the word *samañ-sika*, spirit's money, which is applied to metal filings (cf. Chinese imitation paper money).

45. *Onipa wu (wɔ̃) samampɔw mu a, wɔ̃mfá no mma ofie bio.* (2416)

When a man dies in the spirit grove (cemetery), he is not brought back to the home again.

Wɔ̃. This verb often takes the place of the preposition 'in' or 'at' in English (cf. *mā*, see note on No. 14).

Wɔ̃mfá, mma. Translate by the passive. For note on the negative see No. 33, *mfa, nsisi.*

46. *Wunnɪ samañ aduañ a, wɔ̃mfa wo nsa nto mu.* (914)

If you are not going to partake of the spirits' food, do not put your hand in it.

Samañ aduañ. Food set aside for the spirits.

47. *Wubu wó sumáñ asumammá u, ekita wo.* (655)

If you call your amulet a trifling thing, it will seize hold of you (kill you).

Sumáñ. See note on No. 35, *ɔsamañ*.

Asumammá. Diminutive of *sumáñ* (see No. 35, *ɔsamañ*).

48. *Opanyin ano sen suman.* (2610)

The advice (lit. mouth) of a man of ripe experience is more potent than (your) little guardian deity.

Opanyin. See note on *panyin*, No. 1.

49. *Suman kafirma nye biribi a, na eye amñade.* (3114)

If the little *kafirma* charm is good for nothing else, it is at any rate an adornment.

Amñade. *Mña*, to dress, adorn, and *ade*, thing.

50. *Enni bābiara a wotrā ŵe yisa hinam suman so a, enye nnam.* (2306)

There is no special place where one should sit and chew guinea pepper and blow it out over one's tutelary deity, to make it a sharp (clever) little amulet.

Hinam. To blow out in a spray from the mouth, a common form of propitiation. (This is also done in the case of a 'soul washing', see No. 147.)

The writer has noticed a similar custom among the Mañanjas of Central Africa, who when propitiating the spirits of their dead also squirt water out of the mouth in this way.

Yisa, nnam. An example of sympathetic magic—'like causes like'—the sharp biting pepper to cause the *suman* to be sharp.

51. *Obi mfa nea wawu suman nkā se, 'Mā me ñkwā nè akwāhōsan'.* (162)

No one takes the amulet of one who has died (and whom therefore it has failed) and addresses it, saying, 'Give me life and health'.

52. *Wo kra nye a, na wunyā asafo nsam' amanne.* (1760)

If your soul is not a lucky one, you fall into the hands of a 'company'.

Asafo. A union or company of men banded together under a leader, chosen from among their number by popular vote, to compel the recognition of a real or imaginary grievance or to further some plan, good or perhaps bad, upon which all are of one mind; or perhaps again, merely for the purpose of joining together to work in turns for each other, say at cultivating or clearing a plantation.

These companies or confederations adopt a leader, as already

stated, and assume an emblem or flag, and the confederation is given a name, generally one explaining the *raison d'être* for the amalgamation. The following are a few examples of 'company' names.

- { *Kyiriamin*, 'We hate greediness'.
 { *Apesemaka*, 'We wish to present our grievance'.
 { *Apagya*, 'Strike a light' (with flint and steel).

Asafo, of course is also a war company (see No. 306, note on *dom*).

The saying quoted above means, that with an individual, whom one may run foul of, one may have a chance, but when a whole community are against you and determined one and all on your destruction, there is little chance for you.

Kra. See note on No. 9, *ñkrabea*.

Amanne=*Oman-ade*. *Oman*, see note on No. 474.

53. *Ñkrabea nhĩnũ nsé*. (1762)

All destinies are not alike.

Ñkrabea. See note on No. 9, *ñkrabea*.

54. *Wode wo kra kaw, na woantua no a, ofa wo abufuw*. (776)

If you are in debt to your soul, and have not paid it, (your soul) gets angry with you.

Wode . . . *kaw*. Lit. owe a debt to, i. e. (in present context) fail to fulfil some vow you have made, e. g. a promise to sacrifice a fowl. *Kaw*, (Ashanti, *ka*) deriv. perhaps *ka*, to remain. Note the following, *de kaw*, to hold or have a debt; *dan kaw*, to sue for recovery of a debt; *tua kaw*, to pay a debt.

Woantua. Perfect tense.

Abufuw. Lit. swelling of the chest, cf. *kõn dõ*, q.v. No. 34.

55. *Obi ñkwati Tanno nkõ aka ase*. (222)

No one consults the lots without calling on (his) fetish (lit. *Tanno*).

Tanno. Perhaps the most famous fetish in Ashanti and the Gold Coast. Called after the river *Tanno* in which it has its abode. The fetishes *Tanno* and *Bea* (also a river), are supposed by some of the natives to be the children of the Supreme Being *Onyámé* (q.v. No. 1), *Tanno* being the first in importance. The following is a popular myth with regard to them. When the Supreme Being was premeditating as to where he should set down the abodes of his children on earth, the goat heard of it and being

a great friend of Bea ran and told him that when his father sent for Tanno and him, he should rise up and go very quickly so that he should arrive there before his brother. So when the children were called before their father, Bea came first and his father, as a reward, set his abode down in the coolness and shade of the forest country, whereas Tanno was given a home in the more open grass lands. In consequence, to this day the followers of Tanno, 'turn their back on', or 'hate', i. e. taboo the flesh of the goat.

There are many minor fetishes all owing their power to Tanno whose name is added to their own, e. g. *Tanno Yao*, *Tanno Akwasi*, *Tanno Konkroma*. The water of the Tanno is brought from long distances to found a temple or shrine for the spirit in villages far from the river. The fish in the Tanno are never eaten, nor its water drunk, and the fish are fed on various ceremonial occasions.

The Tanno fetish is so famous, that its name is sometimes used almost as a generic term for all fetishes, as in the saying here quoted.

Nkwati, nko. For note on the negative see No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.

Aka. Lots, of various kinds, strings with different articles attached to the ends, *akamatĩvẽ* (see No. 412), and dice (see note on No. 25, *sikyi*), a pot of water with models of hoes, axes, and sometimes a stone celt, in it. These are fished out with a wooden spoon and the omens read from what turns up. This last is called *nsuoyā*. The consulting of lots is part of the duty of the fetish priest, *okomfo*, (q. v. No. 22), but there is another class of medicine men, *duñsinfo*, lit. 'root folk', i. e. persons who dig for roots for medicines, who also combine with this occupation that of diviner or oracle man.

56. *Sasabonsám kò ayi a, osoe obayifo fi*. (2782)

When a *sasabonsám* (devil) goes to attend a funeral, he lodges at a witch's house.

Sasabonsám. Deriv. *bonsam*, a devil, or evil spirit (not the disembodied soul of any particular person, just as the fetish is not a human spirit).

Its power is purely for evil and witchcraft. The *obayifo* is perhaps its servant, as the terms are sometimes synonymous. *Sāsā* or *sēsā* is the word used for a person being possessed of a spirit or devil (*oye no sāsā*).

The *asasabonsam* is a monster of human shape, living far in the depths of the forest, and only occasionally met by hunters.

It sits on tree-tops and its legs dangle down to the ground and have hooks for feet which pick up any one who comes within reach. It has iron teeth. There are female, male, and little *sasabonsam*. A large fungus growth very like a big cabbage in appearance often found growing on trees is called *sasabonsam kyew*, i. e. devil's hat.

Ayi. Burial, funeral. Deriv. *yi*, to take away, to remove. (For custom of burying slaves, wives, &c., with a dead master, see note on No. 467.) The grave is a deep trench from 6 to 8 feet deep in one side of which a cavity is again dug, forming as it were a room, with three walls. (Cf. the Chinyanja *mudzi*, 'village' or last home.) The body is placed in this case, which is then fenced or screened off. Chiefs and men of importance are buried in the house in which they die, which then becomes their tomb.

Obayifo. Deriv. *bayi*, sorcery (synonymous term *ayen*), a wizard, or more generally witch. A kind of human vampire whose chief delight is to suck the blood of children whereby the latter pine and die.

Men and women possessed of this black magic are credited with volitant powers, being able to quit their bodies and travel great distances in the night. Besides sucking the blood of victims, they are supposed to be able to extract the sap and juices of crops. (Cases of coco blight are ascribed to the work of the *obayifo*.) These witches are supposed to be very common and a man never knows but that his friend or even his wife may be one. When prowling at night they are supposed to emit a phosphorescent light from the armpits and anus. An *obayifo* in everyday life is supposed to be known by having sharp shifty eyes, that are never at rest, also by showing an undue interest in food, and always talking about it, especially meat, and hanging about when cooking is going on, all of which habits are therefore purposely avoided. A man will seldom deny another, even a stranger, a morsel of what he may be eating, or a hunter a little bit of raw meat to any one asking it, hoping thereby to avoid the displeasure of one who, for all he can tell, is a witch or wizard. (See No. 76.)

The *obayifo* can also enter into animals, &c., e. g. buffalo, elephant, snakes, and cause them to kill people. The *obayifo* is discovered by a process analogous to the 'smelling out' of witches among the

Zulu, i. e. the 'carrying of a corpse', see note on No. 77. Witches and wizards are guarded against by a *sumani* (q. v. No. 17, *obosom*). and a little raw meat or other food is frequently placed at the entrance to a village for them to partake of. This offering also frequently takes the form of a bunch of palm nuts pinned down to the ground with a stick.

57. *Sasabonsám té ase, wose oye obayifo, na menne se osi odum atifĩna odum nso sow mmoatia.* (2783)

When a *sasabonsám* devil is down on the ground he is called a wizard, how much more when he is perched on top of an *odum* tree, and the *odum* tree is also bearing a crop of tailless monkeys as its fruit.

Menne. Lit. I do not mention; neg. of *de*.

Odum. The *odum* tree (*Chlorophora excelsa*).

The *odum* tree is universally considered among the Ashantis as a potential abode of a fetish and one may constantly see offerings placed at their base. An *obayifo*, too, may alight on them, and also, as mentioned here, the *sasabonsam*.

The tree, like all earthly abodes of spirits, is nothing in itself, but only by virtue of its being the body in which the fetish or spirit may dwell. An *odum* tree that may have been universally revered, on falling down, then becomes merely a tree, for the fetish which invested it with awe will have gone to seek a new abode. *Odum* trees are never cut down for firewood, nor used for making stools.

Sawyers, who cut them down for Europeans, for timber, are supposed sooner or later to go mad or die.

The following legend about the *odum* and the supposed etymology of the word *duñsini*, a stump, is curious and interesting. (Cf. supposed origin of suffix *fo*, see No. 78, *kontromfĩ*). When all the trees were given names the *odum* tree asked all the others to add its name to theirs, but this they would not agree to. Later on, however, as the trees found themselves cut down for firewood, building, &c., &c., while the *odum* still stood untouched and even revered, it seems that they, when too late, took its name, i. e. *duñsini* = *odum*, the *odum* tree, and *sini*, a piece or fragment.

It is interesting to note that rubber trees were for long regarded as the abode of little children fetishes because 'they wept when cut'.

Big prices for rubber, however, soon caused this idea to be set aside, though the priests first tried to prevent tapping.

Mmoatia. A half-mythical man monkey, supposed to be exceeding swift and used by devils and wizards as messengers.

58. *Se odum osi ho a, ose oye Otanno, na obonsam abesi so . . . !*

When an *odum* tree stands *there*, it declares it is *Tanno*, but when a devil comes and perches on it . . . !

Odum. See note above, No. 57.

Otanno. See note on No. 55, *Tanno*.

Obonsam. See note on No. 56, *sasabonsám*.

59. *Owu a akum wo nã nè wo agya wo ho a, wunnye diñ se, 'Aka me ñkõ'.* (3477)

When Death which has killed your mother and your father is there (with you again), you do not say to him, 'I alone remain'.

Owu. See note on No. 16, *owu*. Death, personified, is blind but can hear. When he hears 'you alone remain', he will immediately want to complete his work of destruction.

Nã, agya. For Ashanti classificatory system, see note on *nã*, No. 37.

Wunnye diñ. *Wunnye*, neg. of *gye*, lit. you do not receive the name of. . .

60. *Owu bekum wo se nè wo nã a, nsũ se, 'Me se nè me nã awu', na sũ se, 'Me nè m'agya nè me nã bekõ'.* (3479)

If Death has come and killed your father and your mother, do not weep, saying, 'My father and my mother are dead', but weep and say, 'I and my father and my mother will go (with you)'.

61. *Owu bekum wo na wofre no agya a, obekum wo, wofre no enã a, obekum wo.* (3480)

If Death comes to kill you and you supplicate it, calling it 'Father', it will kill you, and if you supplicate it, calling it 'Mother', it will kill you.

62. *Owu adare nnow fãkõ.* (3481)

Death's sickle does not reap one place alone.

63. *Owu ñhĩnã ye owu.* (3483)

All the different forms Death takes are just the one Death.

64. *Owu na wannyā bābi ankō a, na okō asāman.* (3484)
When Death has no particular place to go to, then it goes off to the world of spirits.
Asaman. See note on No. 35, *osaman.*
65. *Owu nè wo ase hye wo adiŕuma-ye a, owu de na wokō kan.* (2485)
If both your father-in-law and Death appoint a day for you to do some work, it is Death's you will go about first.
66. *Owu to wo a, wunse no sɛ, 'Fīŕe aberewa !'* (3486)
When Death overtakes you, you do not say to it, 'Look, there is an old woman (take her) !'
Sɛ. This word has lost its association with its original root *sɛ*, to say, and become exactly the equivalent of the English 'that'. Were it treated as a verb it would have to be negative, see note on No. 33, *mfa, nsisi.*
Aberewa. An old woman, not a disrespectful term, sometimes used for mother.
67. *Owu wɔ okyēkyēfo adaka ano safɛ.* (3487)
Death has the key to open the miser's chest.
68. *Owu nye pia na wɔadi mu ahyemfiri.* (3493)
Death is not a sleeping-room that can be entered and come out of again.
Ahyemfiri. Deriv. *hyen*, to enter, and *firi*, to come out.
69. '*Mirewu kyēna, mirewu ne', na yede ye ayie ?* (3494)
'I am going to die to-morrow, I am going to die to-day,' do they begin the funeral custom (because of such words) ?
70. *Wurewu a, wunse sɛ, 'Mirewu ō ! mirewu ō !'* (3495)
When you are (really) dying, you do not say, 'Oh, I am dying! Oh, I am dying' !
71. *Obi nim nea owu wɔ a, ankā onsi hɔ ara da.* (263)
If one could know where Death resided, one would never stop there.
72. *Nea wahintiw awu no, wontutu 'mirika nko n'ayi ase.* (2170)
When a man has met his death through having stumbled (fallen), one does not run to attend the funeral of such an one.
Awu. Subjunctive mood.

Wontutu, iko. For negative, see note on No. 33, *nfa, nsisi*.
Ayi. See note on No. 56, *ayi*.

73. *Okom nye Krakye Dente nye.*

Hunger is not good (good, in sense of, 'to be lightly thought of'),
 neither is *Krakyē Dente*.

Krakyē Dente. Probably after Tanno (see No. 55, *Tanno*), the most famous fetish on the Gold Coast. The present abode of its chief fetish priest is a cave, situated about thirty feet high on a rocky hill-side at Kete Krakye on the Volta river, in what was once German Togoland.

The spot, which the writer once visited, is situated in a grove with a broad path leading to it. At the entrance to the grove stands the symbol of this fetish, a tall, conical mound about seven feet high with the apex hollowed in the form of a bowl to receive the sacrifices made to it. The path and open space at the foot of the face of the cliff, where the cave is situated, are kept clean and swept; the grove itself contains a large circular clearing. Climbing up the face of the cliff, one comes to the mouth of the cave, which has been roughly built up, rags hang in front of this opening. The entrance is higher up through a narrow passage which leads into the cave, which again by another passage leads into a second chamber which opens on to the grove by the walled up front mentioned. One has to wait quite a considerable time before entering the inner cave to allow thousands of bats to fly out. The floor of the cave where one enters is ankle deep in a fine powder caused by their droppings. Piled high against one side of the cave are hundreds of gin bottles, offerings to the *okomfo*, who sits in the cave and gives utterance to those who come to consult the fetish, addressing them in the grove below, from behind the partially built up face of the rock. The symbol of Dente, the conical mound, may be seen in almost every village in Ashanti, and there would seem some uniformity in this particular design, even among other fetishes having no connexion with Dente, for their abode is often a piled up mass of clay, feathers, blood, somewhat in the form of a cone. (Cf. the Delphic oracle.) The following is a tradition of the supposed origin of the name Dente. The original name of this fetish was *Konkom*, and its chief priest resided some hundreds of years ago at Date (in Akuapem).

The fetish priest lived in a cave there. His sanctuary was

violated by a man, who, when the priest was stretching forth a hand to receive an offering, dragged him out, disclosing a man covered with sores. After this the priest left Date and went, first to Agogo, and thence to Kratchi (Krakye), and there took up his abode in the cave described. Not knowing the Krakye language, he could not make himself understood, and to inquiries as to his name, &c., could only reply he came from 'Date', which in the local language is Dente. For fuller account of 'fetish' worship, see note on No. 17, *obosom*.

74. *Obayifo ba wu a, eye no yaw.* (59)

When a witch's child dies, it makes her sad.

Obayifo. See note on No. 56, *obayifo*.

75. *Obayifo oreko ē! obayifo oreko ē! na wonye obayifo a, wuntiba wo ani.* (60)

A witch is passing! a witch is passing! (some one cries), but if you are not a witch you do not turn your eyes to look.

76. *Obayifo kum wādi-wammā-mè, na onkum wāmā-me-na-esūa.* (61)

The sorcerer kills (by magic) the one who eats and gives him nothing, but he does not kill him who eats and gives him (even) a little piece.

See note on *obayifo*, No. 56.

77. *Efunu a ebesi nim sūdew.* (1163)

The corpse which is coming to knock against (some one) cares nothing for cries of sorrow.

The custom of 'carrying the corpse' (*afunsoa*) when the cause of death is supposed to be witchcraft is briefly as follows. An open stretcher is made of palm branches, and on this the corpse is laid, being surrounded by *damāram* leaves (the vivid crimson leaf one sees so frequently in Ashanti and along the line from Secondee to Coomassie) and *emē* (mint?) and *onunum* leaves (q. v. No. 38). The stretcher is then placed on the heads of two men, who carry it out into the street. The whole people assemble. The chief, or head man of the village, advances cutlass in hand, and addresses the corpse, saying, 'If I were the one who killed you by magic, advance on me and knock (*si*) me'. And so on each in turn comes up till the guilty one's turn comes, when the corpse will urge the carriers forward to butt against him with the litter. A person so accused can appeal for a change of carriers.

CHAPTER II

WILD ANIMALS, &c. : THE MONKEY, ELEPHANT, LION, LEOPARD, ANTELOPE, CROCODILE, CRAB, OTTER, PORCUPINE, TORTOISE, LIZARD, SNAIL, SNAKE.

78. *Kontromfĩ se*, ' *Qberañ wu né kóko* '. (1717)

The monkey says, 'The brave man dies because of his brave heart'.

Kontromfĩ. Other names for various species of monkeys are *oduahyeñ* ('the white tail'), *adu*, (the dog-faced baboon), *efo*, (Ashanti, *efoo*, the black colobus monkey).

There are many myths and stories about monkeys, and one at least is worthy of notice, proving as it does that the savages possess even their rude philologists, and showing that they have that innate curiosity which compels them to ask and find a reason for many things (which inquiring state of mind some would deny to them altogether), however childish and unsatisfying to our minds the answers they are contented to accept may be. They say that when *Onyanköpon* created and named all things, He went about accompanied by the *efo* (colobus monkey), and when he had done this work, the *efo* requested that his services and assistance might be rewarded in some suitable manner, and suggested having his name perpetuated for all time by having it suffixed to the names of all peoples, nations, and occupations. To this the Creator agreed. Hence we have the suffix *fo*=*efo* in all such words, e. g. *Asantefo*; *Mampon-fo*; *adiwuma-fo*, &c., &c.! The singular suffix, corresponding to *fo* (which is plural) is *ni*, and this is, the natives state (correctly no doubt), derived from *onipa*, a man.

Monkeys are supposed to have got their tails in the following way :

The Creator (*Odomankoma*, see No. 1) made men, monkeys, and tails, &c., &c. (the tails apart from monkeys). The monkeys, after the habit of their kind, would pick up the various things lying about that *Odomankoma* had made, among other things they kept playing with were the tails. One monkey, picking one up, stuck it on behind him, when all the rest copied him. When they tried to take them off again, they found they had grown on, and they were compelled to wear them for ever after.

79. *Kontromfĩ se, 'Afei ne ampa'.* (1718)

The monkey says, 'Well now I shall *really* speak the truth'.

80. *Kontromfĩ se, 'Me sumañ ne n' aniwa'.* (1721)

The monkey says, 'My talisman (against surprise and enemies) is my little eyes'.

Sumañ. See note on No. 17, *obosom*.

Ne. See note on No. 1, *ne*.

Aniwa. *Wa* is the diminutive suffix (sometimes also feminine), and as *ani* is sometimes used for eyes, can be here translated by 'little eyes'. *Ani* perhaps, however, more literally means face, front, or surface of a thing. *Anim*, lit. in the front, is the word used for face. *Nsu ani*, the face, or surface of the water.

81. *Kontromfĩ se, ohũu ayi akyẽafo adi.* (1719)

The monkey says that there is nothing like poverty for taking the conceit out of a man.

Ayi . . . adi. *Adi*=*adiwo*, an open space.

Akyẽafo. For suffix *fo*, see note on No. 78.

82. *Kontromfĩ se, 'Wohye m'afonom' a, na meyi asempa makã makyere wo'.* (1720)

The monkey says, 'If you fill up my cheeks (with food), then I shall reveal the truth and tell you'.

Makã, makyere. Subjunctive mood.

83. *Yenim se kontromfĩ koi wo ho, na yede hãmã to n'aseñmu.* (2343)

We know the monkey has a neck, but we nevertheless take a string and attach it to its waist.

Hãmã. Lit. a creeper, hence used for rope or string.

N'aseñmu. *Aseñ*, the waist. Note the following words, all spelt alike (save for the prefix vowel which is generally omitted) and distinguished from each other only by accent or change in vowel sound:

1. (*E*)*señ*, a court herald (*e* as in fed).
2. (*O*)*sẽñ*, a pot (*e* broad).
3. (*O*)*sẽñ*, from *sẽñ*, to surpass (*ẽ* nasal).
4. (*A*)*señ*, the waist (*e* between *i* and *e*).

It is this variety of vowel sounds which (in words otherwise spelt the same) alters the entire meaning, that makes the Twi language one of exceptional difficulty for the European to master.

84. *Obi ihye kontromfĩ mmã onni soñ.* (195)

No one compels a monkey to eat the tamarind (?) fruit. (The *osñ*, tamarind (?), is the favourite food of monkeys).

Nhye . . . mmã, onni. Note the negatives running throughout ; see note on No. 33, *nfa, nsisi.*

85. *Oduahyeñ se, 'Nea ewo m'afonom' nye me dea, nea ako me yam' na eye me dea'.* (1026)

The white-tailed one (the black colobus monkey) says, 'What is in my cheek is not mine, but what has gone into my belly that is my very own'.

Oduahyeñ. *Dua*, a tail (lit. stick), and *hyeñ*, bright or white.

Me dea. *Dea*, as, *me de*. This suffix *de* is used to form the possessive pronouns. This *de* is probably the word *ade*, a thing, and the construction is really the possessive adjective qualifying the noun *ade*; *me de*, mine (lit. my thing). *Ade*, thing, is again a noun formed from the root *de*, to hold, to possess; *ade*, something held, a possession, a thing. The writer knows no language in which it is possible to get down to roots and root meanings in words more often than in Ashanti or Twi. There are few words of more than two syllables which cannot be broken up into their component parts, and the student of the language who will devote attention to the mastery of roots and basic stems will find his future studies much simplified, and render the acquisition of a vocabulary a much more pleasant task than had he merely endeavoured to learn dissyllabic and polysyllabic words without knowing the roots from which they are built up.

86. *Kontromfĩ akwakorã na gware kontromfĩ aberewa.* (1715)

It is Mr. Old-man-monkey who marries Mrs. Old-woman-monkey.

87. *Kontromfĩ kyẽa senea akyẽafo kyẽa, nso ne to kō.* (1716)

The monkey struts about just as a conceited person does, but its bottom is red nevertheless.

Ne to kō. There is a kind of monkey which the natives declare speaks these words, '*Wo to kō, wo to kō*' (lit. You red bottom, you red bottom'), and certainly the sound this monkey makes seems, once one has heard the interpretation given, to be exactly these words. The black colobus monkey with the white tail 'says', '*Wahu, wahu?*' (Have you seen, have you seen?). The sounds made by many birds and animals are put in words by the natives, and once one

has heard these sounds interpreted into words, it is easy to imagine that the sound produced represents the exact words ascribed. The native does not think it so very extraordinary, and is quite ready to ascribe a limited knowledge of his language to birds and beasts while recognizing that he cannot of course always understand what they say.

88. *Mahũ kontromfĩ a ne yerẽ awu na wasiw atimum, na wo wansai de, efa wo hõ deĩ ?* (1445)

I have seen a monkey whose wife has died and he has let his hair grow long in consequence, but as far as you are concerned, Bush-buck, how does it concern you?

It is the bush-buck (male), with its long horns like plaited hair, to which the allusion is made. The saying is quoted in the sense that one man's troubles are no concern of any but his own family.

Yerẽ. Wife (see also note on *nĩ*, No. 37, table of terms of relationship or classificatory system F). The derivation is possibly from the same root that is seen in *yèrè*, to be stretched out on, spread out, strained upon.

89. *Esóno akyi nni aboa.* (3029) Cf. No. 90, following.

After the elephant there is no other animal (to compare with it in size and strength).

Esóno. Lit. 'the big one', deriv. *so*, big, and *no*, the pronoun, he; *e* the noun prefix. Cf. *susono*, the hippo, lit. 'the big one of the water'.

Akyi. The back of anything, hence behind, used of place and of time. The same root is probably found in *kyi*, to dislike, hate, of a person or thing. In the latter sense it is the word used for taboo, the idea in both these words probably being, to turn the back on. (See also note on No. 132, *wokyi*.)

Nni. Neg. of *wɔ*, to be.

Aboa. An animal, anything having life, a creature; used of and applied to animals, birds, fishes, insects, reptiles, and even man, but in this last case generally, though not always, in an abusive sense, 'You beast'.

The word is often used in apposition with the name of the animal, insect, &c., specified, e.g. see Proverbs Nos. 172, 175. If you want to insult a man very much, you call him, '*onipa aboa*', 'a man beast'.

90. *Ēsóno akɔ̃i aboa ne bòm̃mofó!* (3028)

After the elephant is a (still greater) animal, the hunter!

Bòm̃mofó. See note on *bòm̃mofó*, No. 131.

91. *Ēsóno kuntañ na adowa di panyĩñ.*

The elephant is big and bulky but the (little) duyker has most experience and sense.

Kuntañ. Better perhaps *kuntãĩñ*, anything huge, ponderous, heavy.

Adowa. A species of duyker, in Ashanti stories has a character for pertness and cleverness.

92. *Ēsóno nni wuram' a, ankã ekó yɛ obopon bi.* (3023)

If the elephant were not in the jungle ('bush'), then the buffalo would be one of the greatest of the beasts.

Nni. Neg. of *wɔ*.

Wuram'. *Wura mu*, lit. in the grass (bush). The word is used in the sense of 'the bush', i. e. jungle, forest, as a whole, whereas without the preposition *mu*, the meaning is restricted to some grass or bush in particular. The plural means weeds, i. e. grass or bush growing where it is not wanted. *Ekwa², kwaem'* is particularly thick bush or dense forest.

Ankã. See note on No. 733, *ankãñã*.

Yɛ. See note on No. 1, *ne*.

Obopon. *Aboa pon, pon* a suffix meaning great, large.

93. *Ēsóno tia afiri so a, eihñañ.* (3031)

When the elephant treads on a trap, it does not spring (on it).

Afiri. Many of the traps in use are extremely ingenious. *Sĩm afiri* is, to set a trap.

94. *Okáka bu sono sɛ.* (1515)

Toothache breaks the elephant's tusk.

Okáka. *Okekaw*, the many one-tusker elephants are supposed by the natives to have lost the second tusk owing to toothache.

Sɛ. Also *abeñ, ɛsóno-beñ (=asommei)*.

95. *Nea ɛsóno wui n'afikyiri no, ɛhɔ ahabaĩ ñhñã sãe.* (2244)

Where an elephant died, all the leaves in his backyard were spoiled.

(Trampled down by people coming to cut up the meat.)

Wui. Perfect tense.

N'afikyiri. Lit. back of house.

96. *Qsekan-tiá biako ññuá esóno, ññua ko, ññua odeñkyem-mirempon,*
na wasan̄ agua onaiñkã, na wasan̄ atɔ̄a wo wura nsa, na
won̄hon̄ wo nto ade mu ana ? (2850)

One little knife which cannot flay an elephant, which cannot flay a buffalo, which cannot flay a big-throated crocodile, and yet you have gone out of your way (lit. turned back) to flay a python, and gone out of your way to cut your master's hand, will you not be plucked from your handle and cast into some place (out of the way)?

Ññua. Neg. of *gua*.

Agua. Subjunctive mood.

Won̄hon̄ . . . nto. For note on the negatives see No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.

97. *Esóno di asãwa.* (3022)

An elephant eats the (little) *asãwa* berries.

Asãwa. Not *asawa*, the cotton plant, but a shrub with small berries, distinguished from the former word by the nasal *ã*.

98. *Esóno afoñ a, wonné mpakam-mã gha.* (3024)

When an elephant is thin, that is not to say its meat will not fill a hundred baskets.

Wonné. Neg. of *de*.

99. *Esóno afoñ a, wonñua no berew so.* (3025)

(Even) when an elephant is thin, it is not skinned on a palm leaf.

Wonñua. Neg. of *gua*.

Berew. The oil-palm leaf.

100. *Esóno hõ na wobõ apuruwá.* (3026)

It is from the elephant that big lumps of meat are cut.

Apuruwá. Deriv. perhaps *puruw*, round.

101. *Esóno kàkrā, na adowa na ode ne ha.* (3027)

The elephant is a huge beast, but it is the duyker that is the (real) king of 'the bush' (jungle).

Kàkrā. With the tone rising on the second syllable, and a long final *ā*. *Kakra*, with an even intonation, has exactly the opposite meaning, 'little, small'.

Ha. *Eha*, the jungle, or 'bush', as it is called in West Africa. By metonymy the word is used for hunting, *ye ha*, *ahayo*, (the last a verbal noun).

102. *Esóno nyã wo a, adowa bɔ wo mɛ.* (3030)

When the elephant has got you in his clutches, the (little) duyker (comes up) and slaps you.

103. *Obi nnyae sóno akyi di ñkodi aseredoa akyi.* (300)

No one gives up following an elephant to go and follow the little aseredoa bird.

Another version often heard is, *obi . . . ñkɔbɔ aseredoa bo.* No one . . . to throw a stone at the aseredoa bird.

Nnyae . . . ñkodi. See note on No. 33, *mfa, nsisi.*

104. *Obi nni sóno akyi mmoro hũãsú.* (256)

No one (who) is following an elephant has to knock the dew off the grass.

Nni . . . mmoro. Neg. of *di*, and *boro.*

Hũãsu. Deriv. *hũã*, to brush against, and *nsu*, water.

105. *Wudi sóno akyi a, wontã.* (893)

When you follow an elephant you do not get entangled (with creepers). Cf. No. 104, above.

106. *Obiakõfo na okum sóno, na amansaɛ ñlĩnã di.* (455)

It is one man who kills an elephant, but many people who eat its flesh.

Amansaɛ. Deriv. *ɔmaɛ*, people, nation, and *sãɛ*, to draw a line. (Cf. *santeɛ*), a long line of people.

107. *Ebia wobedi sóno na biribi ñhã wo, na wudi apatã a, na dompe ahã wo.* (444)

Perhaps you will eat a whole elephant and nothing will stick in your throat, and then you eat a (little) fish and lo! a bone has stuck in your throat.

Ebia. Perhaps the word is really a sentence—*e bi a*, 'there is something that . . .'

Ñhã. *Hã*, to stick in the throat; perhaps the same word as *hã*, to be in trouble, distress, which is generally used impersonally, *ehã me.*

108. *Wode kokũrokó na edi amim a, aĩkã esóno bɛba ofie.* (753)

If mere bulk and size could be used to further greed and violence, then the elephant would have come to the haunts of men (to seize what he wanted).

109. *Wode sôno ñhōma bu kotoku, na wode deñ ahyem'?* (768)
 You may make a bag out of an elephant's hide, but what are you going to find to put in it?
Bu. The idea is of bending or folding up the skin to form a bag.
110. *Obi nnim nea esôno di yee kесе.* (278)
 No one knows what the elephant ate to make it big.
111. *Obi nsusu sôno yam' mmu ahabañ.* (346)
 No one breaks off a leaf in order to measure the size of an elephant's belly with it.
Mmu. Neg. of *bu*. For idiomatic use of the negative see note on No. 33, *mfa*, *nsisi*.
Ahabañ. Deriv. *ha* (q.v. No. 101) and *bañ* (?), to lie or be arranged in a row (?).
112. *Enye aduañ na esono nyã di kyei adowa nti na oye kесе señ no.* (3597)
 It is not the greater amount of food that the elephant eats than the duyker that makes it greater in size than he.
113. *Womfá akārā ntow sôno.* (1084)
 A wax (bullet) is not used to shoot an elephant.
Ntow. *Tow*, lit. to throw or cast, as a stone or a spear, hence, when guns were introduced, of firing; lit. 'throwing' a bullet.
114. *Gyata dōsō ñviram' a, ankã nnipa nnyã bābi ntrã.* (1260)
 If lions were very numerous in 'the bush', then man would have no place to stay.
Gyata. Often called simply, 'the great beast' (*aboa kесе*).
115. *Woboro gyata a, wo tiri pā wo.* (611)
 If you strike a lion, your own head will pain you (you will not do the lion any harm).
116. *Gyahene hō nye deñ a, onné kañkañ.* (1257)
 Even when a lion is not a strong lion, it is not called a civet cat.
Onné. Neg. of *de*.
Kañkañ. Civet cat. Deriv. perhaps, *kañkañ*, stinking.
117. *Ade hĩa osebo a, oñe wura.* (800)
 When a leopard is hard pressed for food, it chews grass.
Wura. See note on No. 92, *wuram'*.

118. *Kūrotviamansā nennan sisia ase mā osisia wosow biribiri.* (1852)
The leopard that prowls about under the thicket causes the thicket to shake greatly.

Nennan. Reduplication of *nam*.

119. *Kūrotviamansā fa awuru a, odannañ no lunu.* (1851)
When a leopard catches a tortoise it turns it over and over in vain.

Awuru. As *akyekyere*.

Odannañ. Reduplication of *dañ*.

120. *Kūrotviamansā se, onam ha mu kwa, akyekyere na ode ne ha.* (1853)

The leopard declares he prowls the bush to no purpose, and that the tortoise really owns his jungle kingdom.

The following is the story on which the saying is based. A leopard was prowling about the bush in search of prey, and suddenly seeing a tortoise, sprang on it, exclaiming, '*Manyā wo*', 'I've got you'. The tortoise, however, replied, 'As for me, I have been watching you long before you ever saw me'. The saying is quoted in the sense that, a king may think he knows all about the affairs of his subjects, whereas in reality they probably know a great deal more about his.

121. *Aboa kūrotviamansā hūñũ ato nifā, ankrāna aboa bi nni wiram'.* (519)

If the leopard could spring upon its prey to the right hand, then no animal would be left alive in the bush.

Lions, leopards, and other animals of the cat tribe are all supposed, as it were, to be left-handed, that is to say, they spring to the left on seizing their prey. A hunter will try to get a left shoulder shot in preference to another. Native hunters say they know these animals are left-handed by observing that animals found killed by leopards, &c., are always, so they say, clawed on the right side, and by observing spoor which, when turning, goes off to the left.

Nifā. Possible derivation, *enĩ fā*; *enĩ*, honour, (*di no enĩ*) and *fā*, place. There is a scrupulous distinction in many ways between the left and the right hand. (See note on No. 725.)

Ankrāna. *Aikā*, *anikāna*, see note on No. 733.

Wuram'. See note on No. 92.

122. *Aboa a osebo antumi anni no, agyinamoa mfa no afõ.* (497)
The animal which the leopard has been unable to kill and eat, the cat is not going to eat its carcass.

Antumi anni. *Anni*, neg. of *dī*. For note on the negative see No. 33, *mfa*, *nsisi*.

Agyinamoa. Deriv. *gyina*, to stand, and *emōa*, ditch, hollow, hole. There is a phrase, *oko gyina emōa*, he has gone to hide himself (lit. gone to stand in a hole), hence of the cat crouching to spring. Another common name for the cat is *okra* (lit. soul), and an Ashanti literally often calls his cat, '*me okra*', my soul. When one of the household is ill and the family cat disappears, hope of recovery is given up. The Ashantis do not eat cats, but the Fantees do. Though not held in any particular veneration they are considered as uncanny and never ruthlessly interfered with.

123. *Obi nkyere osebo ba atow.* (233)

No one teaches a leopard's cub how to spring.

An almost similar saying is common in Malaya, where, as Sir Hugh Clifford told the writer, they say, 'No one teaches the tiger's cub how to kill',—the interpretation in both countries, Malay and Ashanti, being the same, i. e. 'The king's sons do not need to be taught violence'.

124. *Wode sebo ñhōma sūa adǝvinni a, na wode aǝvie.* (765)

When you use a leopard's skin for practising leather work on, it shows you have mastered your trade. (Cf. No. 373)

Adǝvinni. *Adǝvini*, a skilled trade, such as goldsmith, leather-worker, &c.; *adǝvinni* (double *n*) = *adǝvini dī*, to practise a trade. Leopard-skins, used for *omaihenē*'s drums, litters, &c., are much rarer than sheep- or goat- skins, and hence would not be used for experimental work unless a man was thoroughly sure of his skill.

125. *Osu fǝe sebo a, ne hō na efow, na ne ñwārāñ-ñwārāñ de, empopa.* (3054)

When rain beats on a leopard it wets him, but it does not wash out his spots.

Osu. Rain, see note on No. 26, *nsu*.

126. *Ēko kum Krānni a, meñko no ayi, na Okrānni kum 'ko a, minni ne nām.* (1598)

When a buffalo kills an Accra man, I do not go to his funeral, and when an Accra man kills a buffalo, I do not eat its flesh.

Ēko. The West African buffalo or 'bush-cow', probably, after the elephant (some might place it first), the most dangerous of all animals when wounded and followed up.

Ayi. See note on No. 56.

Okřānni. Suffix *ni* for *onipa*, an Accra man.

Ŋkrañ is the Accra of the European.

The saying above quoted is meant to express deep and undying hatred, or two persons or conditions that could never have anything in common or become reconciled to each other.

127. *Qtĩě dua ye tiā a, nea ode pra nehō ara neñ.* (3412)

The duyker's tail may be short, but it brushes its body with it notwithstanding.

Neñ. *Neñ* = *ne no*.

128. *Qtĩě ñhōma sũane nea eye hare.* (3413)

The duyker's skin (hide) splits where it is thinnest.

Hare. Light, quick, nimble; here thin, fragile.

129. *Qtĩě ańko gua, ne ñhōma ko.* (3414)

The duyker does not go to market, but its skin does.

Antelope hides are used for covering loads to keep the rain off.

Ańko. Lit. has not gone.

130. *Qtĩě nè qtĩě kō na wohũ gyahene a, na woko afã na woguañ.*
(3415)

When two duykers are quarrelling, and they see a lion (coming), off they run together (forgetting their quarrel).

131. *Qtĩě ani anseñ a, na efi bommofo.* (3416)

When the antelope is unhappy, it is the hunter who is the cause.

Bommofo. Also spelled *obomofo*, and *obofo*; deriv. *bō* to strike, to hit. Hunters among this people, with a few exceptions, are not as skilful trackers or as close observers of the habits of game as their brothers in East and Central Africa.

They have one accomplishment, however, which, as far as the present writer knows or has seen, is not known to the Anyanja, Angoni, or Chipeta shikari. They can call up the smaller game, bush-buck, duyker, &c., by imitation of the bleat of the doe or kid. (Cf. the calling of moose.)

Hunting among the Ashantis is a recognized profession. It is not every native who would care to take the risks involved, for not by any means the greatest of these risks is the actual danger run by hunting bush-cow or elephant. The Ashanti shikari runs other risks. 'A mad hunter' (*obofo damfo*) is a common expression,

a sort of equivalent of our 'as mad as a hatter'. If the hunter does not take great care to propitiate the spirits (*sāsā*) of the larger species of game he may kill by ceremonial dances (*abofosi*), he is supposed in time to become mad. The *otromo* (*bongo*), is an especially dangerous animal in this respect. In a hunter's dance the man goes all over again in realistic mimicry the killing of the animal whose *sāsā* he wishes to avoid entering his body.

Butchers also are thought to go mad sooner or later for a similar reason.

132. *Otiwē nyā nantu a, wokyi.* (3417)

When (you see) a duyker which has a (thick) leg, that is something you avoid (make a taboo).

Nyā nantu. Lit. got a calf (on its leg).

Wokyi. The verb *kyl* is used in two senses, to hate, to dislike, of a person or object, and to hate in the sense of refuse to eat an animal or thing owing to some religious (totemic) observance, that is, it is exactly rendered by the word taboo.

The native literally says, 'I hate fish', 'I hate goats' flesh', 'I hate eggs', or whatever may be his particular taboo. The derivation is possibly the root *kyl*, back, to turn one's back on, see note on No. 89, *akyl*.

133. *Otiwē m'pōrow adu kūrōm'!* (3418)

Let the antelope rot in the hollow of the tree! (A congener of our 'dog in the manger'.)

The following is the story on which the above is founded. A certain man had a hunter whom he used to send to kill game but he never allowed him the smallest portion of any animal he brought in. One day the hunter, having killed an antelope (a duyker), hid it in a tree and went and asked his master saying, 'If I should happen to kill anything to-day, will you give me a piece?' The master said 'No'. The hunter then went off muttering as above, 'Let the antelope. . .'

Adu. For *dua*.

134. *Odeinkyem da nsu mu, nso onom mframa.* (859)

The crocodile lies in the water, but it also drinks (breathes) the air.

Nsu. See note on No. 26.

Onom. Lit. drinks. Cf. Hausa *sha iska*, to drink the air.

135. *Odeñkyem ɔ̃were sene ɔ̃were-pá de.* (860)

A crocodile's skin is sweeter than any other skin.

The skins of many animals are used to boil down and make soup of. Some, sheep's, goat's, &c., only in times of want, others, again, as the hippo's and elephant's, are considered a delicacy.

The word *ɔ̃were*, skin, is found in many idiomatic expressions, which curiously remind one of English slang, e.g. to jump out of one's skin; by the skin of one's teeth, save your skin, &c. E.g. *ne ɔ̃were bo*, the price of his skin, the value of a slave; *ne ɔ̃were nsõ mmã no*, lit. his skin is not big enough for him; that is, of a person jumping about, fidgety; *me ɔ̃were fi*, lit. my skin has come out, I have forgotten; *me ɔ̃were kyekye*, my skin has become tight, I am happy, &c.

Were-pá. See note on No. 483.

136. *Funtumfrafu deñkyem frafu, wɔwɔ yafunu koro nanso wonyã biribi a, wɔfom, nanso won nhĩnara wɔ yafunu koro, nanso wodi no amenemutwitwi.*

The 'Two-headed crocodiles' have but one belly for both, yet when either of them get anything they fight among themselves for it, for though they both have only one belly for each of their separate heads, each wants the food to pass down its own throat. (This proverb is not among those in the 'Tshi Proverb' book.)

Funtumfrafu deñkyem frafu. There is a mythical crocodile supposed to have two heads and two necks which merge into a common belly, which again merges into two tails. This emblem is one of the many 'Ashanti weights', most of which are probably symbolical; see note on No. 591.

This clever metaphor clearly states the ideas of a communistic people.

Funtumfrafu. *Funtum*, to collect together, *fra*, to mix, and *fu*=*afunu*, belly; *funtum-frafu deñkyem frafu*, therefore means literally, 'Bellies mixed up, crocodiles mixed up'.

Won nhĩnara. Lit. they all; *nhĩnara*=*nhĩna ara*.

Amenemutwitwi. Deriv. *amene*, throat; *mu*, in; *twitwi*, to rub, i.e. of the food rubbing (in its passage down the gullet) the throat.

137. *Wutiŋa asu ɔ̃wie a, na wuse odeñkyem ano pow.* (3405)

When you have quite crossed the river, you say that the crocodile has a lump on its snout.

Wutřča . . . wie. Translate, 'When you have finished crossing', 'or quite crossed'. The English idiom 'to finish doing anything', which is expressed by a finite verb and a participle, is in Ashanti, and all other native languages known to the writer, expressed by two finite verbs. E.g. 'he has finished doing' is translated by two finite verbs in two principal clauses, he has done, he has finished. *Wa* is understood before *wie*.

138. Okótó a oda siká hõ po tǔvère abé. (1739).

Even the crab, that lives where the gold dust is, eats palm nuts.

(Palm nuts are supposed to be the food of poor people.)

Okótó. Either the land or sea crab. Crab claws are tied on the hair of a child whose brothers and sisters have all died (such a child is called *begyinaba*, lit. 'it will stand (remain) child'). See also note on No. 486, *kobuobi*, for prefix 'ko added to names of such children by way of cheating Death into supposing the child is really a slave, and also No. 574 note.

Hô. Here a locative complement of the verb *da*.

Twére. To skin with the teeth.

139. Okótó ñwo anõmã. (1740)

A crab does not give birth to a bird.

140. *Okótó bene asuo 'ti na onim asuo kasā.* (1741)

Because the crab lives near the river he knows the language of the river.

Bene. Perhaps past tense.

'*Ti.* For *nti.*

Kasā. Speech, language ; deriv. *kā asem* (?).

141. *Okótó bo pemmo a, osari n'akyi.* (1742)

When a crab falls down plump on its bottom, it turns back. (To fall so is considered a bad omen.)

142. *Okótó foforó aperew mu nni nãm.* (1743)

A young crab has no meat in its claws.

Foforó. Lit. new, here 'young'.

Ani. Neg. of *wo.*

143. Okótó guan a, oguan kó pom'. (1744)

When a crab runs away it is towards the sea it flees.

Pom = epo mu.

144. *Okôtô na onim sika dabere.* (1745)

It is the crab that knows where the gold dust is to be found.

Dabere. Lit. 'the sleeping-place of'.

145. *Okôtô annyã adayé nti na oda amõa mu.* (1746)

Because the crab has no good place to sleep in, it lives in a hole.

Adayé. *Da*, to lie, to sleep, and *ye*, good.

146. *Okôtô po di sukõm, na menne okwaku a oda osoro.* (1747)

Even the crab gets thirsty, not to speak of the monkey that sleeps up above.

Sukõm. Lit. water hunger, *nsu okõm*.

Menne. Neg. of *de*.

147. *Aboa dompó nni asumguarede nti na onam asu hõ bõ akôtô.* (505)

Because the otter (?) has made no preparation for the washing of its soul, that is why it walks about digging for crabs (to offer to the soul).

Nni asumguarede. Di asumguarede (asu-mu-guare-ade). The following is an account of 'a soul washing' (*okra-guare-ade*; *okra-guarede*). Perhaps once a year an Ashanti fixes on a day on which to wash his *okra* (soul or spirit). See note on No. 9, *ñkrabea*. The relatives are informed, and as many pure white fowls collected as the person can afford.

On the appointed day the fowls are carried down to the water in an *añowa* (brass or metal bowl). *Adwira*¹ (a small plant) and *ñsome* leaves which have been collected are then dipped in the water and the fowls are sprinkled over. The person who is washing his soul then addresses it, asking it to prosper him and bring him luck. (This part of the ceremony may also be performed at home). On returning to the house the fowls are killed and the blood sprinkled about the corners of the house compound. Yams or plantains are mashed and cooked (no oil being used in order that they may be white). These and the fowls are eaten by the assembled friends. There is for that day a complete cessation of all work; no one can demand payment of a debt or swear the king's oath (see note on No. 496, *wokã*) on the person on that day. The idea of a good or perhaps rather, lucky *okra* being white is a strong belief; *okra biñ*, black soul, is said of an extremely unlucky man; there is no connexion with morality or purity of soul in our sense of the word.

¹ The town of Ejura (which should rightly be spelled EDWIRA) is so called after the plant.

148. *Kotókó rekó kotókó a, omfa adidide.* (1750)

When the porcupine is going to visit the porcupine, he does not take any food with him.

Kotókó. The Ashantis call themselves *Asante Kotókó*, the Ashanti Porcupines. The saying above means, when an Ashanti man goes on a visit to an Ashanti man he will rely on the hospitality of his host. The idea in the name *Asante Kotókó*, is 'nemo me impune lacessit'.

Adidide. *Adidi* (reduplication of *dí*, and *ade*).

149. *Aboa akyekyere nni ntama, nsoso awow nne no da.* (522)

The tortoise has no cloth, hair, or wool, nevertheless it does not ever feel the cold.

Nni. Neg. of *wó*.

Nsoso. Reduplication of *nso*.

Nne. Neg. of *de*.

150. *Mmoadõmã nhĩnã foro bo, akyekyere ñ'kofofo bi, wapõn afĩe.*

All animals (can) climb stones, but let the tortoise try to, and he tumbles down. (Said of an unlucky person.)

Ñ'kofofo. Imperative mood, with the auxiliary *kó*. Lit. let him go and climb.

Wapõn. Perfect tense, 'he has fallen down'. See note on No. 757.

151. *Akyekyere nni nufu, nso owo a, onim nea oye yeñ ne ba.* (1924)

The tortoise has not any milk, but when it gives birth, it knows how to rear its child.

Nufu. By metonymy for *nufusu* (*nufu nsu*), lit. breast water.

152. *Akyekyere kó serew serew na oguañ ara neñ.* (1925)

The tortoise goes off in a laughable manner, but he can escape all the same.

Neñ = ne no.

153. *Akyekyere na okyere ne bõbere na wobõ no.* (1926)

It is the tortoise itself that exposes its vulnerable spot (the head) and has it struck.

When the natives want to kill and eat a tortoise (the flesh of which is much relished), they scratch the tortoise on the back, which makes it show its head.

154. *Akyekyere pe ne yere amanne, ose, 'Wow m'akyi mmesã (wow mmesã gu m'atiko), ná menkõfĩe agoru'.* (1928)

When the tortoise seeks a quarrel with his wife he says, 'Plait the tress of hair falling down my back and let me be off in search of some fun'.

155. *Akyekyere se, 'Obarima mfere aguani'.* (1929)

The tortoise says, 'A man need not be ashamed to run away'.

Mfere. *Fere* has a great variety of meanings, the idea of embarrassment or shyness seeming to be at the root of all. It is used of the respectful fear a child should have for a parent, and also for the strictness with which a parent treats his child. (See No. 378.) The word is used in a religious (religious in the wide sense, as in Tylor's famous 'minimum definition') signification, e.g. *fere Onyanköpon*, sometimes in the place of *kyi* (q.v. No. 132), to shun, to make taboo; and as in the sense used above, fear of ridicule. Cf. No. 718.

156. *Akyekyere se, 'Ntem ye, na ojõm ye'.* (1931)

The tortoise says, 'Haste is a good thing and deliberation is also a good thing'.

157. *Nhwĩ nyẽ-nã a, ankã akyekyere nni bi?* (1467)

If hair was not difficult to grow, would not the tortoise have some?

Nyẽ-nã. *Nã* is suffixed to certain verbs and gives the verb the idea of difficulty in the performing of the action implied in the verb. Thus *ye-nã*, difficult to be done; *tow-nã*, difficult to throw, &c.

158. *Wokõ awuru kũrom' na odi dõte a, wudi bi.* (1584)

When you go to the village of the tortoise and it eats earth, you eat some oo. (Cf. No. 297.)

Awuru. Another name for the tortoise, *akyekyere*.

159. *Awuru reĩea (na) ne ba reĩea, (na) hena na obegye woñ tātā?* (3504)

The tortoise crawls, and his child crawls, and which will take the other and teach him how to walk upright?

Reĩea. Present continued action, expressed by *re*.

Obegye woñ tātā. *Gye tātā*, to teach an infant how to walk. *Tātā*, lit. baby language, spoken to the child to encourage it to try and stand and walk towards the person who is holding out the hands to receive (*gye*) it.

160. *Okétew a otare podo hõ bo ye tow-nã.* (1542)

It is difficult to throw a stone at a lizard which is clinging to a pot (without breaking the pot).

Otare. *Tare* has the idea in it of anything adhering to or lying close up against a thing; hence, to plaster with mud (the wall of a house). Here of the lizard lying close up against the pot.

Hõ. A complement of the verb *tare*.

Tow-nã. See note above, No. 157, *nye-nã*.

161. *Okétéw nè ketebõ se diñ na wonsé hõnam.* (1545)

The lizard (*okétéw*) and the antelope (*ketebõ*) have names which are similar, but their appearance is not the same.

162. *Okétéw nim se ayanikaw beba nti na obutuw siei.* (1546)

Because the lizard knows its belly will become painful, it lies down on it (before the pain comes).

Any one who has watched lizards will have noticed them pressing their bellies against the ground, raising themselves up again on their two fore feet, then laying themselves flat again, for all the world like one of Sandow's exercises, where you raise and lower yourself with your arms, while lying face down on the ground.

The chameleon's belly is supposed to burst and the animal to die on its giving birth.

The natives consider lying on the stomach a cure for belly-ache. The saying above is the Ashanti congener of our 'prevention is better than cure'.

Siei. See note on No. 10, *adi asie*.

163. *Okétéw wõ yam aduru a, ankã yam ansi no adurade.* (1547)

Had the lizard medicine against eczema, then its body would not be clothed with eczema.

Yam. A skin disease (eczema?). The rough mottled bodies of some lizards give them the exact appearance of having some skin disease.

Adurade. A shirt or burnous.

164. *Okétéw ñwẽ mako na fifiri mfi atõveroro.* (1548)

The lizard does not eat pepper and sweat break out on the frog.
(A man bears the brunt of his own actions.)

Atõveroro. A small frog. The common word for frog is *apotoro*. Both words are onomatopoetic, *ro ro* suggesting the croaking of frogs.

165. *Ñwaw de nehõ sie a, na wõfa no tope.* (3427)

If the snail takes care of itself, when it is taken, it will be taken as a big snail.

Snails are collected and strung on sticks; they fetch a big price and are considered a great delicacy.

Tope. A full-grown snail.

166. *Ñwaw wu ñkwai nu a, empörow.* (3430)

When a snail dies in the soup, it does not rot.

167. *Qwo de ahöyereu na oka.* (3446)

It is owing to being disturbed that a snake bites.

168. *Qwo aduru, wotew no ahöhare.* (3447)

The herbs to apply to a snake bite are quickly plucked.

169. *Qwo ñka onipa kwa.* (3448)

A snake does not bite a man without a cause.

170. *Qwo ñkesua ñkõ na ebesuw wuram' a, aña biribiara nsee e.* (3449)

If it were only snakes' eggs that were added in 'the bush', that would not have mattered at all.

Nsee e. Lit. nothing would have been spoiled at all. The final particle *e*, makes the statement very emphatic.

171. *Qwo te se hämä, na womfa ñkyekyere ade.* (3451)

A snake is like rope, but it is not (for that reason) taken to bind a thing with.

172. *Aboa nankã nim adekyëe a, aña oda ññia-da?* (524)

If the python knew when it was dawn, would it sleep in the day-time?

Ññia-da. Lit. 'day sleep'.

173. *Wonhũ qwo ti a, wommò no abã.* (1450)

Unless you see a snake's head, you do not strike at it (any other part of the body).

Wonhũ . . . wommò. 3rd pers. plural, can be translated by passive, or 'you', indefinite pronoun.

174. *Qnankanini da ase anyã qñwãm.*

The python lies on the ground and has got a toucan.

This proverb is represented among the Ashanti weights. (Cf. No. 136).

See note on No. 591.

The saying is used meaning that a man need never despair of getting anything, however impossible it may seem at the time.

CHAPTER III

INSECTS: THE SPIDER, FLY, ANTS.

175. *Aboa ananse nam na oso ne dan.* (525)

The spider walks and carries his house (web).

Aboa. See note on No. 89, *aboa*.

Ananse. The spider in Ashanti folk-lore comes easily first as the hero in most of their animal tales. To such an extent has this been so, that the very word for a story in this language, be the spider one of the dramatis personæ or not, is *anansesem*, i. e. *ananse asem*, lit. words about a spider. That these stories probably had a religious or totemic origin seems possible, for to this day a sobriquet for the Supreme Being is *Ananse kokrokō*, 'the Great Spider'. The spider is credited with being very wise, but in Hausa folk-lore he is rather of the lovable rogue order. The following little story, out of the scores current, is given, being a literal translation taken down from the lips of a native.

'The Spider collected all the wisdom of the world and shut it up in a gourd, and was climbing up a tree to deposit it on the top. He got into difficulties, however, before he reached half-way up, as he had tied the gourd on to his belly, and it hindered him from climbing properly. His son, *Ntikũmũ*, who was watching him, said, "Father, if you had really all the wisdom of the world with you, you would have had sense enough to tie the gourd to your back!" His father, seeing the truth of this, threw down the gourd in a temper. It broke, and the wisdom it contained became scattered, and men came and picked up what each could carry away.'

The wife of the spider is known as *Konori* or *Konoro*.

176. *Ananse a gmpɛ aɪwene bi aɪwene, na ɔɪwene tempoɪ mu.* (2098)

A spider which does not really wish to spin spins its web on a much frequented road (where the people passing soon break it).

Aɪwene. *Ñwene*, to weave or plait. This word is also used for the moulding of a pot, in which use we probably have a survival showing that pots were once made by first making a basketwork frame on to which the clay was daubed. A further relic of this

method of manufacture may be seen in the criss-cross designs which are sometimes used to ornament pots.

177. *Ananse se asantrofi se, 'Se wobefiwe ase so a, fiwe ase so, se nso wobedi ñkorowa hene a, fiwe ñkorowa hene so di'.* (2099)

The spider says to the night-jar (?) 'If you are going to look after the beans, look after the beans, but if you are going to be leader in the *ñkorowa* dance, then confine your energies to that' (lit. be leader in the *ñkorowa* dance).

The following is the story on which the above saying is based. The night-jar (?) had a plantation of beans which he had reason to suppose the spider used to come and steal from. Now, both he and the spider were very fond of dancing the *ñkorowa* dance, and the spider used to take advantage of this, and steal off to the bean farm whenever he saw the night-jar at the dance. One day the *asantrofi* hit on the following plan to circumvent the spider. Plucking out some of his feathers, he stuck them in a clay model and set it up in his bean garden and then returned to the dance. The spider, seeing him thus engaged, managed to slip away and went off to steal the beans. Much to his surprise he found what he thought to be the *asantrofi* bird there, and so again returned to join the dancers. Lo, and behold, there was the *asantrofi* among the revellers! Off he slipped to the beans once more, but again there was the night-jar. Returning once more and finding the night-jar (back, as he thought), at the dance, he addressed him in the words of the saying quoted above. The saying is meant to imply that there is often some ulterior motive underlying what looks like merely friendly advice.

178. *Ananse anton kasa.* (2100)
The spider has not sold words.

He has given them freely. The allusion is to the great number of spider stories current among the Ashantis, among whom in fact every story is known as *anansesem*, lit. 'words about the spider', whether the spider appears or is alluded to in the story at all. See note on No. 175, on *unanse*.)

Anton. Perfect tense.

179. *Agya Ananse adi asemmane na 'yepam no, na wannya bābi ankoro na osei padee ani.* (1240)

Father Spider did wrong and we drove him away, and as he had no place to go he hangs from the crossbeams of the roof.

For the story on which this saying is founded see note on No. 175.

Asemmone = *Asem bone*.

Añkoro. Akan dialect for *kɔ*. For note on the negative see No. 33, *mfa*, *nsisi*.

180. *Ag̃ya Ananse ñwoo ne ba Ntikũmã na ɔwɔ nea ɔso ne bɔtɔ*. (1241)
Before Father Spider begot his son *Ntikũmã* he had some one to carry his bag.

This saying is quoted in the sense of 'you are not indispensable, and can go if you want to, I can get some one to take your place', or, 'I managed quite well before I had you'.

Ñwoo. Past tense, formed by lengthening of final vowel.

Ntikũmã. See note on No. 175.

181. *Efere nti na ag̃ya Ananse de ɔtĩvê kyew hye adɔw*. (1112)
Because of shame Father Spider takes an antelope skin hat when he goes to ask people to come and assist him at his hoeing.

Hye adɔw. Cf. *hye da*, to appoint a day for doing anything. The meaning is somewhat obscure. The following interpretation may be given. Antelope skin hats (not now seen anywhere) were worn thirty or forty years ago by some 'elders'. The allusion may be to the markings on the bodies of some spiders not unlike a spotted bush-buck's skin. The spider is supposed to have put on this hat to cover some blemish on his head.

182. *Mireguare suohyew na ananse reguare ne mma, na meguare suoñ-ĩvini e?* (1237)

I bathe in hot water, and the spider keeps washing his children in it, so I shall wash in cold water and what can he do then?

When water bubbles and 'sings' on being boiled, these natives say 'There is Father Spider washing his children'. The saying is quoted in the sense of 'I'll get the better of him somehow'.

183. *Obi ntó anansesem ñkyere Ntikũmã*. (359)
No one tells stories to *Ntikũmã*.

Ntó . . . ñkyere. For the double negative see note on No. 33.

Anansesem. Lit. 'words about the spider', but this is the term used for any story whatever, even one in which the spider does not appear in any way.

Ntikũmã. The spider's child. As the spider is the fount and origin of all stories, the son, *Ntikũmã*, would be supposed to know every story in the world, having heard them from his father. The saying is used in the sense of 'I know all about that, tell me something I do not know'. (See note on No. 175, *ananse*).

184. *Nwansana de ne nsa gu n'akyi a, ose, 'Nea aka akyiri na edõsõ'.*
(2570)

When the fly stretches his legs (lit. hands) behind him, he says, 'There still remains a lot to come' (lit. what is behind is much).

If one watches a fly closely it will sometimes be seen to stretch its feet backward over its body. This proverb is used in the sense of 'I have done a great deal for you, but you can still hope for future signs of favour.'

185. *Nwansana ampa funu hõ a, wode no sie.* (2571)

When a fly does not get up off a dead body, he is buried with it.

Funu. *Efunu*. Deriv. *funu*, useless, rotten, hence a carcass, dead body.

Ampa. The *hõ* is probably the reflexive pronoun, and *pa hõ*, to take itself off. It might, however, be taken as complement of *funu*.

186. *Nwansana pobi, onni ano, na otũvẽre bebuñ.* (2572)

The bluebottle fly (?) has no mouth, but it can strip the green palm nuts.

Onni. Neg. of *wõ*.

Bebuñ. Deriv. *abẽ*, and *bun*, green, unripe.

187. *Nwansana pobi si abeyã mu a, wotaforo mu.* (2573)

Though the bluebottle fly sits on the dish, you lick inside it.

Abeyã. Akyem dialect, in Ashanti *aĩvõva*.

188. *Nwansana ye sisi a, onsi gya mu.* (2575)

Wherever else a fly is going to alight, it does not alight on fire.

Ye sisi. Here *ye* is an auxiliary verb having the meaning of 'about to', 'be prepared to'.

189. *Ohurii di bem, nwansana na oye me sẽ.* (1463)

Now surely the tsetse had good reason to bite me (as every one knows it is a biting fly), for here is the common house fly doing the same (and it is not supposed to bite at all).

This saying is quoted in the sense of 'I prefer, if I must be badly treated, to be badly treated by a superior and not by my equal or inferior', or, again, it was a saying often put in the mouths of slaves who, when their old master had died and left them to his nephews, on being badly treated by them, would say that after all they could not blame their former master for any bad treatment, here were his nephews doing the same.

190. *Ohurii nni gyamfo.* (1464)

The biting fly has no one to come to his aid in trouble. (Cf. No. 192, below.)

Gyamfo. For note on suffix *fo* see No. 78, *kontromfĩ*.

191. *Ohurii si akyekyere akyi kwa.* (1465)

The biting fly gets nothing by alighting on the back of the tortoise.

192. '*Meka nnipa ihĩnā,*' *nti na ohurii annyā ogyamfo.* (1480)

'I shall bite all men,' because of that the tsetse has no one to come to his aid in trouble.

193. *Mfōtē pām ansā-na wōaye yā.* (1146)

Ants have to unite (in great numbers) before they (can) make a noise.

Yā. A hissing sound.

Pām. Nasal *ā*. *Pam*, probably the same root, means to join, to mend by placing together.

Wōaye. Lit. have made. Perfect tense.

194. *Mfōtē te se dīvie, nanso o nē no nse.* (1147)

A white ant is like a louse, and yet they are not really the same.

Dīvie Also *dīviw*.

195. *Mfōtē a wuwu a wobedi wo nām no, na wote hō a, wōivē wo tam.* (1149)

The white ants that will, when you die, devour your flesh, when you are alive eat your clothes.

A . . . a. The first *a* is the relative pronoun, the second the adverb, introducing the adverbial clause of time.

196. *Obi nkōtoa ohāhīni wō nē bōn anō nā onse se, 'Wo ho bōn'.* (215)

No one tracks a black ant to the mouth of its hole and then says, 'You stink'.

Nkotoa . . . onse. For note on the second negative see No. 33, *mfa, nsisi.*

Qhãhíni. The large black ant, which has a most offensive smell; not the large biting ant, which is *ñkráñ*.

197. *Obi nnyina ñkráñ mù ntutú ñkráñ* (313)

No one stands among black ants and picks off black ants.

198. *Nkesua to ñkrañ mu a, mã enna mu, na wɔnam hõ kwa.* (1539)

When an egg falls among black ants, let it lie there, for they will walk over it without being able to do it any harm.

CHAPTER IV

BIRDS: THE HEN AND COCK, VULTURE, HAWK, PARROT, BIRDS IN GENERAL.

199. *Obi ntɔ̀n ne kokɔ̀bere kwà.* (363)

No one sells his (laying) hen without a good reason.

Kokɔ̀bere. *Koko*, *akoko*, a fowl; *bere*, feminine suffix; *akokonini*, a cock. An onomatopoetic word, cf. Chinyanja, *nkuku*, and Hausa, *kaza*.

200. *Akoko nom nsu a, ode kyere Onyanköpon.* (1653)

When a fowl drinks water, it (first) takes it and shows it to the Supreme Being.

This pretty idea is of course derived from noticing the habit a fowl has of throwing its head back when it is drinking.

Onyanköpon. See note on No. 1 on *Onyàmé*.

201. *Akoko di wo yonkö aʋi a, pam no, na dabi obedi wo de.* (1644)

When a fowl is eating your friend's grain, drive it away, for some day it will eat yours.

202. *Akoko ani sã bürofua.* (1652)

The fowl's eye is keen to see the single grain of corn.

203. *Akoko se, 'Ade ansã a, ankã memëe?'* (1655)

The fowl says, 'If it had not got dark, should I have had my fill?'

Ade ansã. Lit. *ade asã*, thing(s) are finished, i.e. it is dark. Cf. *ade kye*, lit. thing(s) appear, i.e. it is dawn.

Ankã. See note on No. 733.

Memëe. Past tense formed by lengthening of final vowel.

204. *Akoko nan ñkum ba.* (1648)

The hen's foot does not kill (her) chicken.

Nan. Sometimes *nantam'* (i.e. 'in the space between the feet') is given instead of *nan*, in this saying.

205. *Akoko hyeñ kye ofie a, obere.* (1646)

When a white fowl remains a long time in a house, it gets red (with earth and dust).

206. *Akokɔ ntaḱara na ɛmã akokɔ ye kɛse.* (1658)

It is the feathers on a fowl that make it big.

Na. See note on No. 1, *na*.

(This saying has been heard in the sense that, it is the number of subjects whom a chief has who make him important.)

207. *Akokɔ ntaḱara nyiñ a, etuatua ne hõnam mu.* (1659)

When the feathers of a fowl grow, they still remain attached to its body.

Cf. No. 206, above. The feathers are here again likened to the subjects of a chief who even when they increase in wealth or importance should still be subject to their chief.

208. *Wo kyere akokotani a, wo tase ne mma kwa.* (1956)

When you have caught the mother hen, you pick up the chickens without difficulty.

Akokotani. The suffix *tani*, applied equally to animals and persons, denotes a state of parentage.

209. *Obi ntwa akokɔ ano mmã akyẽ.* (385)

No one says 'Good morning' before the cock has done so.

Ntwa ano. Lit. to cut the mouth, i.e. forestall in speaking. The day ends roughly when a man retires to rest. A child born at, say, 10 p.m. on a Monday is called *Kwabena*, i.e. Tuesday's child.

210. *Akokɔbere nim adekyẽe, na ofwẽ onini ano.* (1664)

The hen knows when the dawn comes, but she nevertheless looks to the cock (to make it known).

211. *Akokonini bow nsã na ne ɔwere ɔfi akõrõmã.* (1669)

When the cock is drunk he forgets about the hawk.

Were ɔfi. See note on No. 135.

212. *Akokonini se, 'To tamfo ñkõ a, aĩkũ mabon anadiɔ na woakum me'.* (1673)

The cock says, 'Had I nothing but enemies left, then when I have crowed in the night I should have been killed'.

A cock crowing at midnight or long before dawn is immediately killed, as it is considered unlucky. Cf. custom in Scotland of rubbing a cock's feet with salt which crowed before the usual time.

213. *Okokonini, gyae wohõ kyere, na wo nã ne kesua hõno.* (1671)
O cock, leave off being puffed up with pride; after all, your mother
was only an egg-shell.

Hõno. Used of the outer covering of things, husk, bark, shell.

214. *Obi mfa akoko nanase ade, mfa nkoto akokofwewew nanase.* (151)
No one takes the string of beads off a fowl's leg and goes and puts
it on the leg of a partridge.

(The owner often identifies a fowl by a bit of cloth, string, or beads round its leg.)

Nanase ade. Lit. the thing at the bottom of a foot or leg.

Mfa, nkoto. Note the negative verbs following the first negative *mfa*. See No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.

215. *Akoko nni asõ nanso õnyã ne sõtore a, wode bo no ara.* (1651)
A fowl has no ears, so does not get them boxed, but it gets its
beating all the same.

Sõtore. Deriv. *asõ*, ear, and *tore*, to fall on (?).

216. *Akoko-pa na owo asense, asense (se), 'Me nkõ mifi hẽ?' (1654)*
An ordinary fowl hatches out an *asense* chicken, and the *asense*
one (asks in wonder) saying, 'I alone, where did I come from?'
Asense. A fowl with curled ruffled feathers.

217. *Akoko se, 'Kyere akyekyere tutu no', nu ono akyekyere se, 'Na wo de, woubẽre'.* (1656)

The fowl says, 'Catch the tortoise and pluck it,' but he (the tortoise) replies, 'As for you, you will (lit. have tired) tire of trying that'.

Akyekyere. Also called *awuru*.

218. *Akoko ti si ahẽ na worebo mu fe?* (1660)
How big is a fowl's head that they should be striking at it?

Si ahẽ. Lit. it stands how much, i.e. it is not large enough to warrant one hitting it if one does not want to kill the fowl altogether.

219. *Okokonini, gyae akuntuñ-akuntuñ, na yen ñhñã ye kesua mma.* (1670)

Cock, desist from self-glorification, for we are all the children of eggs.

Akuntuñ. Lit. to bend, hence to walk with an affected gait, to swagger.

220. *Akoko a wo nè no da wo, wompe no ntem.* (1641)

The fowl which sleeps in the same hut as yourself, you are not in a hurry to go and search for (you know it will come back to roost, and you will be able to catch it then).

221. *Akoko du ntem a onyi kaw mmã ne wura.* (1642)

When a fowl comes soon to roost, it does not get its master into debt.

222. *Akoko nè krakum kô.* (1650)

The fowl and the turkey quarrel.

Krakum. Dutch, *kalkoen*.

223. *Merebekum akoko, makum obereku na mafïe se adekyëe beye den?* (1815)

I am going to kill (my) fowl, (and) I have (already) killed the clock bird (?), in order to see what the dawn will do.

(The coming of dawn is not what causes the cock to crow or the *obereku* to give forth its liquid notes, but rather these are the cause of the dawn breaking, in the native mind.)

Na mafïe. Subjunctive mood.

Adekyëe. See note on No. 203, *ade ansã*.

224. *Wunim nyansa bebrebe a, womã akoko akyë.* (2331)

If you are too wise a man (said in a sarcastic sense), you say 'Good morning' to a fowl (i.e. you will find yourself led into committing some supreme folly).

225. *Woko obi kürom na okum akoko mã wo di a, enye ne de no na woadi, na wo de a ɔwo fie no na woadi.* (1568)

When you go to some one's town and he kills a fowl for you to eat, it is not his fowl you have eaten, but your own which is at home.

226. *Aboa kòkosakyi kasa kyere obonúkyérefo a, ote.* (513)

When the vulture gives the hyena advice, he heeds it.

Kòkosakyi. Also *opete* and *akrampã*, the vulture.

Obonúkyérefo. Also called *putaku*, the hyena.

The saying is based on the following story. The mother of the hyena died and all his friends assembled to take part in the funeral custom. Day after day passed, and still the body remained unburied, and the mourners began to feel the pangs of hunger.

The hyena alone seemed to remain plump and fat and in no hurry to bring the obsequies to an end by allowing the body of his mother to be buried. Now the reason was that he was all the time visiting the spot where the corpse was *and eating some of it*.

The vulture, which had been attracted by the smell, had seen all the hyena was doing, and on the mourners again pressing the hyena to bury the body, and on his again refusing to do so, drew him aside and told him he had seen all that was going on, whereupon the hyena, fearing disclosure, quickly agreed to bury the body.

The saying means that two persons of similar natures and tastes soon mutually understand each other.

227. *Aboa kòkosakyi nni tuo, na ɔtoɛ asommeɛn.* (514)

The vulture has not a gun, but he sells elephants' tusks.

Nni. Neg. of *wo*.

Asommeɛn. See note on No. 94, *sẽ*.

Dead elephants, and other game are often located by vultures wheeling aloft above the carcass.

228. *Aboa kòkosakyi se akasadi nti na ɔka sumãna so.* (516)

The vulture says it is in order to avoid payment (for what he eats) that he remains on the dung-hill.

Akasadi. Deriv. *di kasa*, to fine or make liable for expenses incurred.

229. *Aboa akrampã, wudi bi biɛn na obi nni wo de.* (517)

Vulture, you eat the excrement of every one, but no one eats yours.

230. *Kòkosakyi akrampã, ne diɛn anye de, na ne hõ anye hũãm.* (1679)

The vulture has not a good name and its body has not a good smell.

Hũãm. Of a good smell; *bɔn* used only of a bad smell.

231. *Kòkosakyi mpe ofie aba a, aɛkã onsisì sumãnã so.* (1680)

If the vulture did not wish to come into the house, it would not stand about on the dung-hill.

232. *Kòkosakyi se, odompo hõ bɔn.* (1681)

The vulture says that the civet cat stinks.

Bɔn. See note above, No. 230.

233. *Opete takāra tīa oīvira ikontompo a, otu tīene.* (2691)
 When a vulture's feather tells its master a lie, he (the vulture)
 plucks it out and casts it away.
Oīvira = Owura.
234. *Opete hō na eye ikwasea, nanso okyi aguare-anni.* (2687)
 A vulture's body is a foolish looking thing, yet even he does not eat
 without first having had his bath.
Okyi. See note on No. 132, *wokyi*.
Aguare-anni. The following is one interpretation given to the
 writer of the above, 'A Hausa man, whom every one knows stinks,
 may be seen bathing his hands and feet' (ceremonial ablutions).
235. *Osansa firi ahunum' reba se, 'Mekokyere nipa madi', na afei akoīvia
 akoko.* (2775)
 The hawk comes swooping down from the sky saying, 'I am going
 to catch a man and eat him', and behold! he makes off with
 a fowl.
Madi. Subjunct., lit. that I may eat. *Na* is understood.
236. *Osansa kō abuw a, ode n'akyi gyaw akrōmā.* (2776)
 When the hawk goes to sit on her eggs, she leaves the *akrōmā*
 (another kind of hawk) to keep her watch (in the sky).
237. *Akō ntakāra, se wuhū ne ūko a, ntow no bo, na ofi dodow mu.*
 (1610)
 A parrot's feather, if you see but a single one, do not throw a stone
 at it, for it comes from where there are a great many more.
238. *Akō ano ye deñ a, obi ūkyere no nni.* (1607)
 Because the parrot has a loud voice, no one catches hold of it to eat it.
Ano ye deñ. Lit. mouth is hard. This, in connexion with the
 parrot, might perhaps be given its literal meaning 'mouth (beak)
 is hard', but the phrase is generally used in the sense of, loud
 mouthed, blustering.
Ūkyere . . . nni. *Nni*, negative of *di*. For note on the double
 negative see No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.
239. *Akō mpe se obi hū ne ūkesua nti na otow gu duam'.* (1608)
 A parrot lays its eggs in the hollow of a tree because it does not
 wish any one to see them.

240. *Anõma biakõ wõ wo nsam' a, eye señ nnõmā du a ewõ ahunum'.*
(2480)

One bird in your hand is better than ten birds in the sky.

Wõ. Here the verb takes the place of the preposition in English. *Wõ* has here its original meaning of 'to stick to (a person, place, or thing)', from which is derived its subsidiary meaning of 'to be', 'to exist in'.

Eye. The verb *ye*, to be good; not to be confused with *ye*, to be, to make, to do.

Señ. See note on No. 261, *nam kyeñ*.

241. *Anõma biara wu wõ soro a, eye deñ ara a, ne ntakara ba gu fam'.*
(2481)

When any bird dies in the sky, whatever happens (lit. whatever it does), its feathers come falling to the earth. (Cf. No. 754.)

242. *Anõma bone na osee ne berebuw.* (2482)

The bad bird fouls its own nest.

Na. Emphatic particle, translated here by the definite article.

Osee. Perhaps past tense, 'fouled'.

Berebuw. Deriv. *bere*, place, and *buw*, to sit on, to squat on, hence 'nest'.

243. *Anõma de ako-nè-aba na enwene berebuw.* (2483)

The bird makes (lit. weaves) its nest by going and coming.

244. *Anõma kese antu a, obua da.* (2484)

When a big (full-grown) bird does not trouble to fly (in search of food), it goes to sleep hungry.

Obua da. To fast; lit. to cover up (the food) (and) sleep.

245. *Anõma koro di aivi a, otiatia so.* (2487)

When one bird alone eats the grain, it treads it under foot (there being more than it can eat).

Aivi. Guinea corn.

246. *Anõma kye dua so a, ogye bo.* (2488)

When a bird remains too long on a tree, it has a stone thrown at it.

Ogye bo. Lit. it receives a stone.

247. *Anõma nãm ñkosõ kye.* (2489)

There is not enough meat in a bird to divide up (among a number of persons).

Nkosõ. *Sõ*, to reach.

248. *Anõma ne nua ne nea ɔ nè no da.* (2490)

It is one of its own family that a bird roosts with.

Nua. Here in its wide sense of any one who has traced descent through the mother's side. See note on No. 37, *abusũa*.

249. *Anõma ano ware a, ɔde didi asuogya na ɔmfá ntĩwa asu.* (2492)

When a bird has a long bill, it uses it for eating on its own side of the river and not for stretching across the water (to eat on the opposite bank).

This saying is often heard quoted in cases of land disputes.

CHAPTER V

DOMESTIC ANIMALS: THE DOG, CAT, SHEEP AND GOATS, CATTLE AND HORSES.

250. *Qkrāmāñ a oko ahayo waiñhũ, na agyinamoa na obeye dei ?* (1765)
The dog which has gone a hunting has not had any luck, so what
can the cat (hope to) do ?

Ahayo. *Ye ha*, to hunt. See No. 101, *ha*.

Agyinamoa. See note on No. 122, *agyinamoa*.

251. *Wo krāmāñ se obekyere sóno amã wo a, odādā wo.* (1769)
When your dog says he will catch an elephant for you, he is
deceiving you.

Sóno. See note on No. 89, *esóno*.

Amã. Subjunct. mood. The verb here takes the place of the
English preposition, for.

Odādā. Also *sisi* and *gyige*, with similar meaning.

252. *Qkrāmāñ se oremfa oyere da, na ofa oyere no, ofa n' agya yere.* (1770)
The dog says he will never commit adultery, but when he does so,
he commits it with his own father's wife.

Oremfa oyere. *Fa oyere*, lit. to take (another's) wife, euphemistic
for 'to commit adultery'. For note on *oyere* see No. 88.

No. Note that this adverbial particle, like *yi*, does not only intro-
duce a subordinate clause of time in which the event takes place in
the past, but also one in which the verb may be present or future.

253. *Qkrāmāñ ne atiremsem da ne bo, na enna ne tirim.* (1773)
A dog's thoughts lie in his chest, but not in his head. (That is, he
is always barking (talking) and never keeps anything to him-
self.)

Enna. Negative of *da*.

254. *Obi se wo se, 'Qkrāmāñ ani ye anañ' a, oboa, abien ye ñhwĩ.* (416)
If any one says, 'A dog has four eyes', he is lying, two are (tufts
of) hair.

Oboa. *Boa*, to lie or to be mistaken; also like its compound,
boápa, to pretend, see No. 361.

255. *Wo nè krāmāñ bɔ abusũa a, nisu mpa wo anɪ ase da.*

If you take a dog (i.e. a quarrelsome, noisy person) as a relation, tears will never dry in your eyes.

Abusũa. See note on No. 37, *abusũa*.

256. *Okrāmāñ anom ye no de a, oñɔɔ ne koimɪ nnawa.* (1768)

Even when a dog's mouth is watering, he does not gnaw at the bells round his neck.

Anom ye no de. Lit. 'in the mouth is sweet'.

Nnawa. *Dā* or *dawa* (same root probably as *da* in *dade*, iron), a bell, often hung round dogs' and cows' necks.

257. *Okrāmāñ fa kesua a, ebeɔ wo n' anom'.* (1766)

When a dog picks up an egg, it will break in his mouth.

Wo. Translate by 'in', but really a verb, *wo*, to be. See note on No. 240, *wo*.

258. *Okrāmāñ na obu be se, 'Ade kese nyera'.* (1767)

The dog has a proverb which runs, 'A big thing does not get lost'.

Obu be. *Bu*, probably same word as *bu* in *bu fo*, *bu bem*, to utter, to pronounce; *be* = *ebe*, a saying, proverb, riddle.

259. *Okrāmāñ si pata so na enyɛ ono na oforee a, na obi na omãã no so sii ho.* (1772)

When a dog is (found) up on top of the store rack, and could not have climbed up himself, then some one must have lifted and put him there.

Pata. A rack or ceiling, often above the dwelling room where odds and ends, pots, calabashes, and yams and plantains are kept.

Oforee, omãã, sii. Past tense, formed by lengthening of final vowel.

260. *Okrāmāñ se, ope 'mirika-hũnnu atú, na menne se n'ase guani atew ayera.* (1771)

The dog says he likes to run about without any particular reason; how much faster will he run when he hears his mother-in-law's sheep has broken loose and is lost.

Atú. Subjunct. after verb *pe*, see note on No. 2, *wope*.

Menne. Neg. of *de*, to mention; lit. I do not mention, that is, not to speak of. . .

261. *Agyinamoa wɔ pɛfo a, ankã oye nam kyeɛ krãmãɛ.* (1285)

Had the cat only some one to help it, it would be sharper even than the dog.

Agyinamoa. See note on No. 122. The idea is that the cat 'walks by itself'.

Pɛfo. *Pɛ* as *sũm akyiri*, *sũm atiko*, to help, encourage, egg on—as a man his dog when hunting.

Ankã. See note on No. 733.

Nam kyeɛ. The comparative degree is expressed by using the verb *kyeɛ* or *seɛ*, to surpass. Hence in pidgin English, 'he good pass', 'he bad pass', &c.

262. *Agyinamoa nam fie sɛ ne kotoku a, anadɔbooa mfa ne nsa ntom'.* (1283)

When the cat walks about the house carrying his bag, the night animal (the mouse) does not put his hand inside.

Fie. Deriv. perhaps *fi*, to come out; *ofie*, the place a person comes out from, his house.

Sɛ. To carry slung over the shoulder, to hang up.

Mfa, ntom'. See note on No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.

263. *Agyinamoa wu a, nkura yam'.* (1286)

When the cat dies, the mice rejoice.

Yam. Lit. the belly. Here the words *eye won*, are probably understood before *yam*. *Eye me yam* is equivalent to *eye me de*. The common phrase is *me bo atɔ me yam*, I am happy. Lit. my chest has fallen into my stomach. See note on No. 34, *kɔn dɔ*.

264. *Agyinamoa akɔa ne botokura.* (1284)

The cat's slave is the mouse.

Botokura. The field-mouse.

Ne. See note on *ne*, No. 1.

265. *Obi nkyyere agyinamoa akrommo.* (228)

No one teaches a cat how to steal.

Akrommo = *Bo nkroɛ*.

266. *Obi nkyyere agyinamoa apákyi mù fɛ́ɛ.* (228)

No one teaches a cat how to look into a calabash.

267. *Aboa agyinamoa nni biribi, nanso owo ahɔhare.* (506)

If the cat has nothing else, it has agility.

Ahōohare. The original gives *ahōhêre*, perhaps some unusual dialectal form or perhaps an error; *ahōohare* is derived from *hō* and *ohare*, lit. lightness of body.

268. *Aboa agyinamoa nim se ntīēm̄u ye de a, aīkū otīē ne mu du Abūrokyiri.* (507)

If the cat really thought stretching itself (after a sleep) was a delightful sensation, it would go on stretching and stretching till it reached to Europe.

Abūrokyiri. Europe. Lit. 'White man's far away' or 'White man's back', i.e. what lies behind where the white man comes from.

269. *Oguanteñ iwō aberek̄yi.* (1233)

A sheep does not give birth to a goat.

Oguanteñ. *Oguan* (q.v. No. 17, *guan*) and *teñ*, long; here, long-legged.

270. *Nea oguan̄ gyinae na ne ba gyinae.* (2165)

Where the sheep stands its kid stands.

Gyinae. Lit. stood, past tense.

271. *Obi m̄fa aberek̄yi nto guanteñ hō.*

No one compares a goat with a sheep.

272. *Oguan̄ bewu, nu onnyā iwui a, wōmf̄re no guan̄funu.* (1227)

When a sheep is going to die, but is not yet dead, it is not called a dead sheep.

273. *Oguan̄ ano k̄ā īkyene a, onnyae īe.* (1230)

When a sheep's mouth touches salt, it does not stop eating it.

274. *Oguan̄ funu mpaw̄ osekañ.* (1228)

A dead sheep does not choose the knife (it is to be cut up with).

275. *Oguan̄ wuda ye odesāni wuda.* (1231)

The day on which a sheep dies is also the day on which a man dies.

276. *Oguanteñ se, 'Mef̄īe osebo na marwo no so'.* (1232)

The sheep says, 'I shall look on a leopard that I may give birth to one like it'.

The idea is common among the Ashantis that a child is influenced in its mother's womb by what the mother has seen or been impressed by during pregnancy.

The saying is taken as meaning, one should not be guided by

appearances. In this case the ewe, seeing only the leopard's beautiful skin, does not inquire as to its ferocious nature.

Na mawo. Subjunctive mood.

277. *Odǔennini ye asisi a, efiri ne kōma emfiri ne mmeñ.* (1060)

When a ram is brave, (its courage) comes from its heart and not from its horns.

278. *Aberekyi se obedañ guanteñ a, tuntum mpa mu da.* (94)

Though the goat determines to turn into a sheep, there will always be a patch of black somewhere.

Mpa. *Pa*, generally in its reduplicated form of *popa*, means 'to rub out, blot out'; lit. 'black will never be rubbed out'.

279. *Aberekyi se, obi namtew ñkowu.* (95)

The goat says no one will (willingly) walk to his death.

The Ashantis say that, whereas a cow or sheep will walk to the slaughtering place, the goat, which in the ordinary way will follow like a dog, has often to be carried.

Namtew ñkowu. For note on the negatives see No. 33, *nfa*, *nsisi*.

280. *Aberekyi se, nea abogyabum wo no, eho na adidi wo.* (97)

The goat says that where there is much blood, there is food.

Abogyabum. Deriv. *mogya* or *bogya*, blood, and *bum*, to cover, to spread (?).

281. *Aberekyi se, 'Woato me nã, na woanto me'.* (98)

The goat says, 'They have bought my mother, but they have not bought me'.

282. *Aboa aberekyi na obu ne be se, 'Ade pa na wokata so'.* (498)

The goat has a saying which goes, 'A good thing is (sure to be) covered over'.

283. *Nantiwi mmeñ ani awo, nso ase ye mono.* (2109)

The outer surface of a cow's horns is hard, but underneath is soft.

Mmeñ. Sing. *abeñ*.

284. *Obi nto nantiwi nammoñ.* (354)

No one buys a cow's footprint.

Nammoñ. Deriv. *enãñ*, foot, and *bone*, hollow or hole.

285. *Enye nantiwi ñkō na ofiri Sàraha baa Kumase.* (3612)

It is not only cattle that come from Salaga to Coomassie.

Sàraha. Salaga, a large Hausa and caravan centre in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, once a famous centre of the slave trade, to which the above saying alludes.

Kumase. Now officially spelled Coomassie. The derivation is from *kum*, to kill, and *ase*, under, beneath, i.e. 'under the kill (tree)', from a large tree under which executions used to take place, when the town was the head-quarters of the Ashanti paramount chief.

286. *Opõnkõ mmañ kwa.* (2707)

A horse does not turn to the side without a cause. (That is, it is answering to the rein.)

287. *Opõnkõ agyimi a, nea òte no so nnyimii e.* (2708)

Though the horse is a fool, it does not follow at all that the rider is a fool.

E. Emphatic with negative.

288. *Opõnkõ aĩkõ òsa a, ne dua kò.* (2709)

If the horse does not go to war, its tail does.

Òsa. See note on No. 317, *òsa*.

Ne dua kò. A horse's tail is considered as a charm to bring victory to an army, and is always taken on a campaign by a general and his captains. It is often called *obodua*, *aboa dua*, i.e. animal's tail. Horses, of course, do not live long in Ashanti owing to 'fly'.

289. *Opõnkõ wò dua, esóno wò dua, na opõnkõ de kyeñ sóno de kākṛā.* (2710)

A horse has a tail and an elephant has a tail, but that of the horse is a little larger than that of the elephant.

Dua. Lit. stick, hence tail.

Esóno. See note on No. 89, *esóno*.

Kākṛā. See note on No. 101, *kākṛā*.

CHAPTER VI

MICE, RATS, ANIMALS THE NAMES OF WHICH ARE NOT
SPECIALLY MENTIONED.

290. *Akura te sɛ nantĩvi a, na agyinamoa akoo ara nei.* (1837)
Even if the mouse were the size of a cow, he would be the cat's slave nevertheless.
Agyinamoa. See note on No. 122, *agyinamoa*.
Nei = *Ne no*.
291. *Akura se, 'Nea okum me nye me yaw sɛ nea ode me fĩve fam'.* (1836)
The mouse says, 'He who kills me does not hurt me as much as the one who throws me on the ground' (after I am dead).
292. *Nkura dódow bore tũ a, enno.* (1838)
When a great number of mice dig a hole, it does not become deep.
Enno. Neg. of *do*.
293. *Aboa kisi nyã fufũ a, obedi, na owoma na enko ne boi mu.* (511)
When the rat gets *fufu* (pounded yam, cassava, &c.), he will eat it, but the pestle (used for pounding it) does not go into his hole.
Aboa. See note on No. 89.
Fufũ. See note on No. 14.
Owoma. A wooden pestle used for pounding grain in a wooden mortar (*owoaduru*). The derivation is *owo ba*, i.e. the pounding child, or child of the mortar.
294. *Okisi kofa adĩve na Onyàmé bo-ayeremu a, oðai atĩvene.* (1553)
When the rat goes to eat palm nuts and the Supreme Being flashes the lightning, he throws them away.
Onyàmé. See note on No. 1, *Onyàmé*. Lit. when the Supreme Being strikes (the darkness) clear.
295. *Okisi apo adĩve.* (1555)
The rat is tired of palm nuts.
Apo. *Po*, to refuse, to decline. The chief food of the rat is supposed to be palm nuts. The saying is taken to mean, a man tires of what he has too much of.
296. *Okisinini anhvũ adĩve-bo, na obere bo a, oĩve bi.* (1557)
When Mr. Rat does not know how to crack a palm-nut kernel, but Mrs. Rat does, he eats some (of her's).

297. *Wokɔ okisi kũrom' na ɔwɛ ññwɛā a, woɔwɛ bi.* (1572)

When you go to the rat's town and he eats palm-nut kernels, you eat some too. (Cf. No. 158.)

Ññwɛā. Plu. of *adwɛ*.

298. *Obi nfi aboa no anim mmɔ hama.* (171)

No one begins to twist creepers into a rope in front of an animal (he hopes to catch).

Mmɔ. Neg. of *bɔ*.

299. *Aboa a ɔbɛba nnim waw.* (495)

The animal that is coming (towards the hunter) knows nothing about the man lying in wait for it.

Waw. To prop up, hence of the screen of palm leaves or branches which the hunter sets up and behind which he crouches at the water-hole. See note on *kɔtew dua*, No. 327.

300. *Aboa a ne hɔ wɔ ñhwɛ fi fifiri a, wonhũ.* (496)

When an animal with a hairy skin sweats, it is not (so easily) noticed. (Cf. No. 305.)

Fifiri. Root *fi*, to come out from.

301. *Aboa bi reinka wo a, ɔññwɛñ ne sɛ ñkyere wo.* (500)

When an animal is not going to bite you, it does not show its teeth at you.

ɔññwɛñ, ñkyere. For the negative see No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.

302. *Aboa ne nea ɔwɛ wura wɔ wuram'.* (526)

It is the animal that eats grass that lives (is to be found) in the grass.

303. *Aboa no ñhintaw nnyaw ne dua.* (528)

That animal does not hide and leave its tail sticking out.

304. *Aboa no kaw nea n' ano sɔ.* (529)

That animal bites wherever its mouth reaches to.

305. *Mmoadɔmã ñhĩnã fi fifiri, na ñhwɛ na emmã yeñhũ.* (541)

All animals sweat, but the hair on them causes us not to notice it. (Cf. No. 300.)

The saying is used in the sense that a rich or powerful man can bear losses or troubles better than a poor one, though both may equally have their worries.

CHAPTER VII

WAR, FIGHTING, HUNTING, GUNS, AND WEAPONS.

306. *Dom gu a, wonhyen no aben.* (956)

When an army suffers defeat a horn is not blown in its honour.

Dom. Deriv. perhaps *do* and *mu*. An Ashanti army is divided up into main body, flankers, rear and advance guard, and possibly both tactics and formation were modelled on our own, though this they themselves deny.

The main body is called *adonteñ* (*dom teñ*) and also contains the special bodyguard of the ancestral stools which are carried to war. This bodyguard is known as *ankobeu* (lit. do not go anywhere else). The right flank is *nifã* (lit. right hand), the left flank is *beñkum* (left hand). A body of men are thrown outside these flanks again, called *nawase*, whose duty it is to prevent a flanking movement on the part of the enemy. The *nawase* do not disclose their position unless attacked. The advance guard are known as *twafo* (cutters), as the name implies, to clear a way through the dense bush. These are preceded again by the scouts, some four to six men called *akwanserafo*. The rearguard is known as *kyidom* (lit. behind the army).

The whole force is under a general, *osahene* (see note on *osa*, No. 317), and under him again are the various *safohene*, or company (*dom fakuw*) commanders. Each *safohene* has his own drums and horns (No. 507, *bomma*). Strategy is not unknown, and the following story is authentic. A general on camping for the night lit fires all round an imaginary camp, and cutting hundreds of plantain leaves spread them on the ground with the white or light coloured side uppermost to represent sleeping men. He then retired with his force. The enemy attacked the supposed camp from all sides, and mistaking the fire of their own men for that of their opponents, inflicted heavy casualties on themselves. The Ashanti, however, rarely fight at night, darkness no doubt holding many terrors other than fear of the enemy. Horse's tails are considered a war charm (see No. 288), and the wounded are switched with

them to make them rise. The use of stockades they say they have learned from Europeans. They are known as *apia* or *apampim*.

The camp followers are called *asansafo* (*nsansa*, a camp).

When the battle is going against an army, the chief will stand upon his stool (an unheard of insult on ordinary occasions), perhaps really with the idea of insulting the manes of his ancestors into assisting the hard-pressed army when prayers and entreaties have failed. Skulls of fallen enemies are put round war drums, the jaws on the horns. Only a general and company commanders take their women folk with them.

Bows and arrows and shields were undoubtedly formerly the weapons of the Ashanti, but so many hundred years ago that all tradition and remembrance has been lost and forgotten. (See note on *tafoni*, No. 522.)

307. *Dom ññui a, wɔ̃nkañ atɔfo.* (957)

The slain are not counted before the (hostile) army has been routed.

Ññui. Neg. perfect tense of *gu*.

Wɔ̃nkañ. Translated by the passive voice.

Atɔfo. Deriv. *tɔ*, to fall; *fo*, personal suffix, see note on No. 34, *osamañ*. *Otofo*, any one who has been killed in war or accidentally met his death.

308. *Dom, wɔ̃kɔ̃ no abooduru, na wɔ̃nkɔ̃ no ahĩ-dodow.* (958)

An army is driven back by courage and not by insults, however many.

Abooduru. Deriv. *abo*, chest, and *duru*, strong.

309. *Dom kum ano-sese-ade, na dom ñkum dommarima.* (959)

The (victorious) army slays him who shouts out challenges and insults, but it spares the brave man.

Ano-sese-ade. Lit. the mouth that keeps on saying things, i.e. insults.

Dommarima. *Dom gbarima*, a man of war, a warrior.

310. *Dom nnim dom akyi.* (960)

An army does not know what is at the rear of an army.

311. *Obarima, woye no dom āno, na wɔ̃nyé no fie.* (50)

A man is made in the forefront of battle and not (by remaining) at home.

312. *Okō aba a, na nsise aba.* (1600)

When war has come, rumours have come.

Nsise. Deriv. *se*, to say, reduplicated, lit. 'say, say', i.e. reports.

313. *Okō ba a, na nsise bō kūrōw.* (1601)

When war comes, it is rumours that cause the fall of the town.

314. *Wokō, kō wo anim a, na wuyi dōm.* (1589)

When you fight and press on to your front, then you will conquer.

315. *Wokō ñkrāñ na ẽnkō a, wontĩcẽne abẽ ññu mu.* (1590)

When you are fighting black ants and they will not go away, you do not peel palm nuts and put amongst them.

Ñkrāñ. The large and fierce black ants that may be seen at times marching in an irresistible column and quickly putting to flight the entire household in any habitation that may lie on their line of march. A form of torture among the Ashantis was to peg a person down in the path of a drive of these insects.

The saying above quoted means that war is war and not to be waged in kid gloves.

Enkō. Note the use of the 3rd person neuter sing. for the 3rd person plural.

Wontĩcẽre . . . ññu. For the negatives see note on No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*; *ññu*, neg. of *gu*.

316. *Wokō na wunyi dōm a, womfá nnommám.* (1591)

When you fight and do not win, you do not lead away captives.

317. *Osa, woko no ñkatae dodo.* (2730)

Many gun-lock covers go to war.

Osa. War. Possibly the word has this meaning only by metonymy, the original meaning being a narrow path (cf. 'war path'), leading through the dense 'bush' or forest.

Woko no. Note the absence of any preposition in Ashanti, in fact there are none, their place being taken by verbs. See note on No. 240, *wō*; and No. 14, *mā*.

Ñkatae. A cover of antelope, or often wart-hog skin, to slip over the lock of a flint gun to keep the powder dry. *Ñkatae*, a noun formed from the verb *kata*, to cover. Every gun used by the Ashantis has such a cover attached to the barrel which readily slips round under or over the pan, as desired. (See No. 329.)

318. *Osa, woko no won agya nma.* (2731)

When one goes to war, it is against one's father's children (i.e. brothers by one father but by different mothers).

Agya nma. Half-brothers (or sisters) by the same father but different mothers. Descent is matrilineal; hence the 'father's child' is not reckoned a kinsman at all, and in the event of a dispute the children half-brothers might find themselves ranged on different sides. (See note on No. 37, *abusña*.)

E.g. *abusña ye dom*, one's own relations, i.e. on mother's side, are an army.

319. *Obi nturu yarefo ñkô 'sá.* (377)

No one carries a sick man on his back when going to war.

Nturu. . . ñkô. See note on No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.

320. *Obôfô à wókodi nò yaw na otuo apae akã ne nsa yi, na wo de, woso brode bedew rekô hẽ?* (549)

The hunter to whom you serve as attendant has been wounded in the hand by the bursting of his gun, so, as for you, where are you setting off to with the bundle of plantains?

Wókodi . . . yaw. *Di obôfô yaw*, means to accompany a hunter to the bush, as a kind of attendant, carrying food and water and assisting him to cut up and carry home anything shot.

Brode. Plantain, not indigenous. Deriv. *boro ode*, lit. European yam.

Bedew. A rough basket plaited out of palm leaves.

321. *Obôfô aboa u wafôm no bíaru nye ketewa da.* (550)

No animal that a hunter has ever missed is small. (Cf. No. 323.)

Wafôm. *Fôm*, to make a mistake, generally used with *so*, hence to miss with gun, arrow, &c.

Another common saying to express exaggeration is as follows: *Enne me tow owansañ kесе bi tuo me fôm no so*, To-day I fired at a very big bush-buck but missed it.

322. *Obomofô, a woakum pete (a wonn ine nãm), woasee wo atuduru.* (600)

Hunter, who have killed a vulture (the flesh of which cannot be eaten), you have wasted your powder.

Atuduru. See note on No. 13.

323. *Obomofo aboa a oko na osõ.* (601)

To the hunter the animal that gets off is (always) the big one. (Cf. No. 321, above.)

324. *Obomofo diin bata sõnnam hõ.* (602)

The hunter's name clings to the elephant's meat.

Bata. To lie close against, hence as here, to be mentioned in connexion with.

Sõnnam. *E sõno nam.* (See No. 89, *esõno*.)

325. *Obomofo fi wuram ba na okura mmere a, wommisa ahayo mu asem.* (603)

When the hunter comes from the bush carrying mushrooms, he is not asked for news of his hunting.

Wuram. See note on No. 92.

326. *Obomofo ko wuram' mã osu to afiwe no, mã ntummoa keka ne hõ, mã awow ade no, mã ofiwerem' awo no, ne ñhĩnana ye due na mede memãe.* (604)

When a hunter goes to the bush and is beaten by the rain, and bitten by flies, and suffers from the cold, and is pricked by thorns, all these hardships are included, when I tell him I am sorry for him.

Ntummoa. Deriv. *tum*, black; and *mmoa*, insects.

327. *Obomofo kotew dua na aboa amma a, osan ba ofie.* (605)

When the hunter crouches behind a tree, but the game for which he is lying in wait does not come, he returns home.

Kotew dua. Lit. to fix a stick in the ground, hence used of cover taken by a hunter when waiting for game, perhaps at a water-hole, where he may have made an artificial screen of branches. (Cf. *waw*, No. 299.)

328. *Obomofo nim aboa yarefo.* (606)

The hunter does not spare (lit. know) the sick animal.

329. *Osu to na obomofo bekum aboa a, efi ne katae.* (3062)

If the rain falls and the hunter kills an animal, that is thanks to the skin cover of his gun lock.

Katae. See note on No. 317, *nkatae*.

330. 'Gye akyekyere komã agya,' nso ye ahayo? (1262)

Here take the tortoise and go and give it to father,' would you also call that hunting?

331. *Enye obi nè bomofo na ekoo wuram'.* (3589)
No one went with the hunter to the bush (i.e. there is no one to contradict you, for you were alone when it happened).
332. *Otuo nyã otiafo a, na odi abaninsem.* (3388)
It is (only) when a gun has a man to cock it, that it performs war-like deeds. (Cf. No. 339.)
Otiafo. *Tia otuo*, to pull back the striker of a flint-lock gun, to cock.
Abaninsem. *Abanin*, a male, and *asem*.
333. *Otuo paé kã obomofo a, womnisa nea odi obofo nam.* (3389)
When the gun bursts and wounds the hunter, the man who happens to eat venison is not blamed for the accident. (Lit. is not asked about it.)
334. *Otuo mpae Abũrokyiri mmekã onipa wo Abibirim'.* (3390)
A gun does not burst in Europe and wound a man in Africa.
Abũrokyiri. See note on No. 268.
Mpae . . . mmekã. For the negative see No. 33, *mfa*, *nsisi*.
335. *Wo atuo sũa a, na wo asem sũa.* (3391)
When your guns are few, your words are few.
336. *Otuo tã hũan a, na e nèpoma se pe.* (3392)
When the lock of a gun is out of order, it (the gun) and a stick are just alike.
Otuo tã. The lock of a flint-lock gun; *hũan*, lit. springs back, that is, will not catch or cock.
337. *Otuo ntow aboa bi nnyae ñkohyehye aboa bi ɔ̀vere mu.* (3394)
A gun-(shot) does not wound one animal and cause pain to another animal. (Lit. the skin of another.)
338. *Otuo yera ñĩfã mu nà ekofi adonten mu a, na enikoo bābi e.* (3395)
When a gun (a soldier) is missing from the right flank of the battle and appears in the forefront of the fight, it did not go amiss.
Ñĩfã . . . adonten. See note on No. 306, *dɔm*.
339. *Tɔ̀verebo nti na otuo di abaninsem.* (3422)
Thanks to the flint-stone the gun performs warlike deeds. (Cf. No. 332.)
Tɔ̀verebo. *Tɔ̀vere*, to strike, and *obo*, a stone.

CHAPTER VIII

CHILDHOOD, YOUTH AND INEXPERIENCE, AGE AND EXPERIENCE.

340. *Oba a obeye yiye, wonyén no kete-pa so ñkô.* (6)

The child which is to turn out any good is not reared entirely on (even) a beautiful mat.

Oba. Deriv. possibly *ba*, to come, to come forth, something produced, also used of the young of animals.

Note *obā*, is a girl, the long *ā* being the feminine and diminutive suffix *wa*.

Wonyén. *Yén*, to rear, nurture, or bring up. Also used of rearing animals and chickens.

Kete. A mat woven of grass.

341. *Oba se ose, nanso owo abusĩa.* (7)

A child (may be) like his father, but he belongs to the mother's side from which he takes his name.

Abusĩa. Referring to the matrilineal descent. See note on No 37, *abusĩa*. For *ose* see note on No 37, *ñ*.

342. *Oba nsĩ a, wommĩ no nĩfu ?* (8)

Is it only when a child cries that he is given the breast?

Nĩfu. See note on No 151, *nĩfu*.

343. *Wo ba nẽ to gu wo sřę so a, wode baha na eyi, na womfá osekañ ntĩa.* (10)

When your child's excrement falls on your lap, you wipe it off with dry plantain fibres, but you do not take a knife and cut (the place) off.

344. *Wo ba saw asa-bone a, se no se, 'Wo asaw nye fe', na nse no se, 'Okra, tete gu mu'.* (11)

When your child dances badly, tell him, saying, 'Your dancing is not good', and do not say to him, '(Little) soul, just dance as you want to'.

Okra. See note on No 9, *ikrabea*. Here used as term of endearment.

Tete. Deriv. *tetew*, to tear up, to spoil.

345. *Wo ba sisi wo kora ba a, enyé, nanso wo kora ba sisi wo ba a, enye.* (12)

When your own child cheats your fellow wife's child, that is not right, and when your fellow wife's child cheats your own child, that is not right either.

Kora. When a man has two or more wives each is called the 'kora' of the other; *kora* means 'jealous'. An exactly similar idiom is found in Hausa where one wife is called by another *kishia*.

346. *Oba-bone nnim kasakyere.* (13)

A bad child does not take advice.

Nnim. Lit. does not know.

347. *Nea abofra pe ototo.* (2124)

What a child wants he buys.

(Said of a foolish person who must have everything he sees and fancies.)

348. *Abofra bɔ̃ nwaw na ommo akye yere.* (557)

A child breaks a snail, but he does not break a tortoise. (Cf. No. 368.)

Nwaw. See note on No 165.

Ommo. Neg. of *bɔ̃*.

Akyekyere. Also called *awuru*.

349. *Osekai-fua na egye nehõ abofra nsam'.* (2846)

It is the knife-blade without the handle that frees itself from the hands of a child (by cutting him).

350. *Abofra nsam' ade nye hye-nã.* (573)

It is not difficult to fill a child's hand.

Hye-nã. See note on No. 157, *nye-nã*.

351. *Woye abofra a, nserew akwatia.* (3564)

When you are a child, do not laugh at a short man.

Akwatia. *Akoa-tia*, short fellow.

352. *Abofra nte ne nã nè n' agya asem a, eye mmusu (. . . odi aduan a ñkyene nnim').* (581)

When a child does not hear the words of its father and mother, there is misfortune in that (. . . he partakes of food in which is no salt).

Na. See note on No. 37, *nĩ*.

N'agya. See note on No. 37, *nĩ*.

Nkyene. See note on No. 577.

Nnim'. Neg. of *wɔ*.

353. *Abofra hũ ne nsa hohoro a, na ɔ ne mpanyiĩfo didi.* (564)

When a child knows how to wash his hands thoroughly, he and (his) elders (can) partake of food together.

Hohoro. Reduplication of *horo*. Note the distinction in meaning between the following words, *hoho*, to wash the hands or face, *horo* to wash things, pots, clothes, &c., *guare*, to bathe the whole body, hence used for 'to swim'.

354. *Abofra tũa fufũ a, otũa nea ebeko n'anom'.* (583)

When a child cuts off a piece (of boiled) yam, he cuts off what will go into his mouth.

Fufũ. See note on No. 14.

355. *Abofra kã na ɛĩko ɔpanyiĩ nsa, na n' aduan de ɛko panyiĩ anom.* (566)

A child's ring does not go on an elder's finger, but as for his (the child's) food it goes into the elder's mouth.

Nsa. Names of the fingers are, *kokorobeti*, thumb; *akyerekwan*, first finger, lit. point out the way; *nsateahene*, middle finger, lit. king of the fingers; *ahene akyiri*, third finger, lit. finger after the king; *kokobeto*, little finger, lit. is the hen going to lay?

356. *Obi nsoma abofra ifiẽ n'ani akyi.* (343)

No one sends a child on an errand and looks to see if he is pleased or not.

Nsoma . . . ifiẽ. For note on the negatives see No. 33.

N'ani akyi. Lit. behind his eyes, used for 'eyebrows'. *Fiẽ n'ani akyi*, means 'to look to see if a person is pleased or otherwise by his expression'.

357. *Woko kũrow bi mu, na diwom a mmofra to no na mpanyimfo na ɛto gyaw won.* (1577)

When you go into some village, the songs which the children sing, the old folk once sang and left behind to them (that is, tradition is handed down).

358. *Abofra sũ a, wõmmõ no duam'.* (578)

When a child cries, he is not bound to a log.

Wõmmõ. Neg. of *bõ*.

359. *Abofra ye nea wõnye a, ohũ nea wõnhũ.* (587)

When a child does what is not (usually) done, he perceives what is not (usually) perceived. (Cf. 360 below.)

Wõnye . . . wõnhũ. Lit. they do (or, one does) not do . . . do not perceive, (impersonal verbs here translated by the passive).

360. *Abofra ye nea õpanyĩn ye a, ohũ nea õpanyĩn hũ.* (586)

When a child does what a grown up person does, he sees what a grown up person sees. (Meaning, he is punished as a grown person is punished.) Cf. 359 above.

361. *Abofra boápa wù a, wõboápa sié nò.* (558)

When a child pretends to be dying, (the best thing to do) is to pretend to bury him.

Boápa. See note on No. 254, *õboa*.

362. *Abofra a okõ asu na õbõ ahĩna.* (554)

The child who goes for water is the one who breaks the pot.

Na. Here emphatic, *the* one, or, it is the, &c. (See No. 1, *na*.)

363. *Abofra bõ mmusu akroĩ a, õfa mu anum.* (555)

Out of nine mischievous tricks a child thinks to play on others, he suffers for five of them himself.

Akroĩ . . . anum. For notes on numbers see No. 772, *adu-onum*.

364. *Abofra koda gya na opere hõ a, ne ntama hyew.* (559)

When a child goes to lie by the fire and is fidgety, his cloth catches fire.

365. *Abofra ñfĩvẽ okwanseĩ ase kwa.* (563)

A child does not look into the soup pot for nothing (he expects to be given some).

Okwanseĩ. Deriv. *õseĩ*, a cooking pot, and *ĩkwani*, soup.

366. *Abofra ketewa bi te fi kese bim' a, mã nò due, na wahũ amanne* (567)

When a small child lives (alone) in a great big house, pity him, for he has seen misfortune (that is, he has responsibility beyond his years).

Te. To sit, to live, (*tena*, to sit, i.e. be seated). The translation of this word literally by the native interpreter has given rise to one of the commonest of the hideous pidgin English expressions which are so common in West Africa, 'he live for', the verb 'live' being used in the place of the English verb 'to be'. Most pidgin English can be traced to some idiom peculiar to the vernacular, which has been followed by the native interpreter when putting the words into English.

Fi. See note on No. 262, *fiē*.

Bim' = *Bi mu*.

Amanne = *Omañ ade*.

367. *Abofra kotow panyin ñkyen.* (568)

The child squats beside the elder.

Kotow. To squat, also used of 'to kneel down'. The Ashantis do not (now) seem to squat down on their thighs like so many African tribes (the *Mananja* and *Angoni*, for instance, who invariably adopt this position when resting, eating, &c.) This may be a result of European influence and the almost universal use of stools. Whether their remoter ancestors adopted a squatting position could no doubt be proved by an examination of an ancient male skeleton (*tibia*), (the female, for obvious reasons, even among tribes who habitually squat, never adopting this position). Professor Thomson, of Oxford, has shown that this squatting position in course of time has an effect on the external portion of the upper tibial articular surface.

Panyin. See note on No. 1.

368. *Abofra ano ye den a, ode hyen aben, na omfa ñhyen woaduru.* (571)

Even when a child has a strong mouth, he blows a horn with it and not a mortar. (Cf. No. 348.)

Ano ye den. Lit. a strong mouth, i.e. quarrelsome, loud voiced. (See No. 238.)

Omfa ñhyen. Note the double negative. (See note on No. 33, *ñisi*.)

Woaduru. See note on No. 14, *owo*. The grain mortar with its wide mouth is likened to some huge musical instrument.

369. *Abofra se okoforo dunsin a mã omforo, na okosõ anim asan aba.* (574 and 403)

When a child says he is going to climb the stump of a tree, let

him climb (it), for when he has gone up it (a little way) he will turn back again.

Dunsiñ. *Dua*, a tree, and *siñ*, a piece, a fragment of anything. For etymology (according to Ashantis) see No. 57, *odum*.

Anim. See note on No. 80, *aniwa*.

Asaɛ aba. The literal translation is . . . he goes up it that he may turn back ; *asaɛ* and *aba* are subjunctive mood.

370. *Abofra se obeso gya mu, mǎ onso mu, na ehye no a obedaɛ akyene.* (575)

When a child says he will catch hold of fire, let him catch hold of it, for when it burns him he will (soon) throw it away.

371. *Abofra se obeye mpanyinne a, mǎ onye, na ebia obenyɔ̃ opanyin a, obi nim.* (576)

When a child says he wants to act as if he were already a chief, let him do so ; as to whether he will ever become one, that no one knows.

Mpanyinne. *Mpanyin-ade.*

372. *Abofra sika te se anyankōma gya, wotiɔ̃ so a, na adum.* (577)

A child's gold dust is like a firebrand of the *anyankoma* tree ; when it is broken up it soon burns out.

Sika. See note on No. 591.

373. *Abofra sũa adwini-di a, enye osebo ñhōma na ode sũa.* (579)

When a child is learning his trade as a leather worker, he does not practise on a leopard's skin. (Cf. No. 124.)

Osebo ñhōma. Leopard skins being rare in comparison with sheep and goats' skins will not be used for experimental work.

374. *Mmofra hũ kore a osu atɔ̃ aboro no a, wose oye opete.* (591)

When children see an eagle dragged by the rain, they say it is a vulture.

Osu. See note on No. 26, *nsu*.

375. *Mmofra ñ'kotu a, wɔaɛhũ tu ; mpanyin ñ'kotu a, wotiati so.* (592)

When children go to pluck them (the *mpempema* mushroom), they do not do so skilfully ; when grown-ups go to do so, they trample on them.

The mushrooms to which this saying refers are known as the *mpempema*, i.e. 'thousands and thousands'. They are very small

and grow close together. The saying refers to anything that is almost impossible to do.

376. *Obi nsoma abofra osoro na oihũain' ase antũveri.* (341)

No one sends a child up aloft and then knocks away the ladder from beneath him.

Nsoma. . . . *oihũain.* See note on No 33, *mfa, nsisi.*

Antũveri. Deriv. *tũveri*, to lean against.

377. *Obi nsoma abofra na ommefa no so abufuw.* (342)

No one sends a child on (a difficult) errand and gets angry (if he does not perform it well).

No so. Lit. on, about.

Abufuw. Lit. *elo*, chest, and *fuw*, to swell. See No. 34, *kon do*.

378. *Opanyiin fere ne mma a, na ne mma suro no.* (2602)

When an elder (a parent) is strict with his children, then his children fear him.

Fere. See note on No. 155, *mfere*.

379. *Opanyiin se ná wanyé à, mmofra nsuro no.* (2613)

When the grown-up threatens to punish, (lit. says) but does not carry out his threat (lit. but does not act), the children do not fear him.

380. *Opanyiin kye a, edũo.* (2606)

When an elder portions out the dish, it becomes cool. (A wise (old) man knows how to settle disputes).

381. *Opanyiin nyin wo ne batũew.* (2611)

An elder grows at the elbow (i. e. becomes rich).

Nyin wo ne batũew. 'To grow at the elbow' is a phrase meaning 'to have amassed riches, to have put aside money'.

382. *Obi ntutu anõmã ñkokyere opanyiin.* (382)

No one plucks a bird and goes and shows it to an elder (to inquire its name). Cf. No. 719.

383. *Opanyiin di nsem ihĩnã akyi a, oman bõ.* (2597)

If an elder were to follow up every (little) offence (in order to inflict punishment), a people (nation) would (soon) go to ruin.

Oman. See note on No. 474.

384. *Opanyiin nni aban̄sosem akyi.* (2598)

An elder gives no heed to idle rumours.

Nni. Neg. of *di*, lit. does not follow.

Abañsosem. Lit. 'words over the wall'.

385. *Opanyin a wanyin né nea wako Asante aba, ne nea wako Aburokyiri aba, atorofa a ewo oman mu nen.* (2596)

The elder who has grown very old is the one (who says) he has gone to Ashanti and returned; (who declares) he has been to Europe and back, a liar among the people is he.

Asante. This is the correct spelling. The *h* which has been introduced comes from the pronunciation (wrong) of the word by the *Ga* or *Accra* people, and became adopted from them by Europeans. This proverb is evidently one from the Coast regions, where Ashanti was looked on as some unknown land from which no man returned alive, and as inaccessible as Europe. The saying means 'an old man's tale'.

Aburokyiri. See note on No. 268.

Atorofa. See note on No. 604, *otōrofo*.

Nen = *Ne no*.

386. *Opanyin didi adibone a, oyi n'asañka.* (2600)

If an elder eats greedily, (he finds) he has to remove his own dish.

Adibone. *Adi*, to eat, and *bone*, bad.

N'asañka. A flat dish made of baked clay.

387. *Opanyin due, 'Mante, mante'.* (2601)

An elder evades responsibility by saying, 'I have not heard, I have not heard'.

Mante. The saying is also sometimes taken to mean, an 'elder should turn a deaf ear to a good deal of the tittle-tattle he hears'.

Mante is also the name of a charm supposed to act as the name implies.

388. *Opanyin begye me nsam' akoñua a, onnyé asase a mete so.* (2603)

Though an elder may take from my hand the stool I sit on, he cannot take from me the ground I sit on.

Begye. Lit. come and take.

Akoñua. A stool, often showing in its carving a high degree of aesthetic art. The stool is the symbol of chieftainship. The paramount chief of all the Ashantis sat on the so-called 'golden stool', the stool of next importance being the 'silver stool' of the *Omanhene* of Mamponi. Each chief has his own stool, and

when he dies his stool is blackened all over, a concoction of sooty spiders' webs and white of eggs being used. The stool is then set in the 'stool house', (*ikoinua fie*), along with other stools of departed chiefs. Every twenty days (*adai*) a sheep is killed and the blood smeared on the stools, each being taken in turn, while at the same time the chief or *okyeame* (q.v. No. 481, note on *omāmpām*) mentions the name and deeds of its departed owner. The meat is shared among the people and there is singing and dancing. The above all takes place on 'Wednesday *adai*'. On 'Sunday *adai*' all the stools are taken out from the 'stool house' and carried in procession to the burial ground; the chief at present occupying the stool leading, carrying a gun, as a mark of servitude to the departed spirits. As the procession goes along the crowds follow, and any one who wishes may make requests to any of the stools (which are now supposed to be tenanted, for the time being, by the spirits of their departed owners). A deafening clamour results as the crowds pour out their petitions. The burial ground reached, only the 'Queen mother', stool carriers and *okyeame* and *banmofo*, undertaker, are allowed to enter. Here another sheep is killed. On the return to the 'stool house' the chief distributes presents, drink, and food.

The bells (one at each end) on a stool are for tinkling to summon the spirit from the *asaman*, spirit world. The stool carriers, on the occasions mentioned above, may be seen swaying from side to side, 'the spirits are pushing them'.

An Ashanti, when rising from his stool, will generally tilt it up against the wall or lay it on its side lest a departed spirit wandering round should sit on it, when the next one to sit down 'would contract pains in his waist'.

The cowries seen fastened under many stools are 'earnest-pennies' representing various transactions, which are then, by the taking and giving of such a pledge, considered as definitely clinched bargains.

389. *Opanyin mē nsòno.* (2607)

An elder can satisfy his hunger with his intestines. (That is, he has other resources to fall back on when needs be, when hunger (used metaphorically for trouble) overtakes him.)

Nsòno. Note the words *nsòno*, intestines; *esonò*, an elephant; and *sono*, to be different.

390. *Opanyin nɛ mmofra hũ nantew a, wɔsoa ne bɔtɔ.* (2608)

When the elder and the children know how to adapt their steps to one another's, they (the children) carry his bag.

Hũ. To see, to perceive how a thing is done or its appearance, hence to know. *Fɔ̃ɛ* means to look at a thing, regard it, that one may perceive (*hũ*) its nature or application.

391. *Opanyin anim asem ye okã-nã.* (2609)

It is not an easy matter to speak face to face with an elder.

Okã-nã. See note on No. 157, *nye-nã*.

392. *Opanyin ano seɛ suman̄.* (2610)

(The words from) the mouth of an old man are better than any amulet.

Suman̄. See note on No. 17, *obosom*.

393. *Opanyin tirim na wɔhɔ̃n akũmã.* (2613)

It is on the elder's head that the axe-head is knocked off (the shaft).

Wɔhɔ̃n. Translated by the passive. *Hɔ̃n* is used of pulling or knocking out something embedded in something else, as a stick out of the ground, a hoe from its handle, &c., probably an onomatopoeic word.

Akũmã. An axe, also called *abonua*, deriv. *obo dua*, stone stick (?), stone axe. There are abundant evidences of a long forgotten stone age in Ashanti. The present writer made a large collection of over a hundred celts or neolithic stone axes (now in the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford), see a paper on 'A Collection of Ancient Stone Implements from EJURA, Ashanti', by Prof. H. Balfour in Vol. XII, No. xlv, Oct. 1912, of the *Journal of the African Society*. There is no recollection or tradition of a stone age among these natives, and the celts are known by them under the name of *ɔnyàmé akũmã*, i. e. God's axes; the etymology of the word *abonua*, if correct, *obo*, stone, and *nua* (*dua*), a stick, which is the native word for axe, being the only clue that these celts were used by the remote ancestors of the Ashantis and not, as some persons are inclined to believe, by a different race and civilization once inhabiting this region. The wearing away of an axe on a stone is also mentioned among the drum messages, see note on *tũa*, No. 507.

The interpretation given to the above saying is, that an elder, or man of weight and experience, can bear the brunt of troubles which may assail the youthful and inexperienced members of his family.

394. *Opanyin to asã a, na ewo mmofra de mu.* (2617)

When the old man's bottom is flat, its fatness has gone to the children.

To asã. Lit. has come to an end, decreased, diminished; hence, has got thin.

Ewo . . . mu. Lit. it is in.

395. *Opanyin ntõ bo-hyew nto abofra nsam'.* (2618)

An elder does not roast a hot stone and place it in the hand of a child.

Ntõ . . . nto. For note on the negatives see No. 33, *nsisi*. Note how the vowel sound alters the meaning of a word, *tõ* (nasal), to roast; *to*, close *o* sound, to place.

396. *Opanyin ntrã ofie na asadua mfow.* (2619)

The elder does not sit in the house and (allow) the loom to get wet.

Asadua. *Asawa*, cotton, and *dua*, a stick, i. e. loom.

397. *Opanyin wo ñkwã a, onni mfensã.* (2620).

Even when an old man is strong and hearty, he will not live for ever.

Onni. Neg. of *dĩ*.

Mfensã. *Mfe abiesã*, lit. three years, but used for an indefinite period of time (see note on No. 767).

398. *Mpanyimfo na ebu bẽ se, 'Gya me nan', na wonse se, 'Gya me ti'.* (2622)

Experienced men have a saying, 'Leave my legs alone', but you will not hear them saying, 'Leave my head alone'.

Ebu bẽ. See note on No. 258.

The following is the explanation given by the Ashantis of this saying. Long ago, when wild animals, lions, hyenas, and leopards, were even more numerous than now, a man, when he lay down to sleep, always took care that his feet and not his head were nearest to the doorway. Thus, if a wild animal got into the hut, it would most probably seize the man's legs, who would then shout 'Leave

my legs alone'; whereas had his head been nearest the door, and been seized hold of, he would have been unable to shout 'Leave my head alone'. The proverb means, a man of experience will not put himself in a position from which he cannot extricate himself.

399. *Mpanyimfo se, 'Maye se wo peñ'.* (2623)

The elder (lit. elders) says, 'I have done as you (are doing now) once upon a time (or, I was as you are)'.

400. *Se mpanyimfo pe wo atõtõ aĩe a, wuihuruw ntra ogya.* (2624)

If the old people want to roast and eat you, you do not jump over a fire.

Atõtõ aĩe. Note the construction in the subordinate noun clause after the verb *pe*. (See note on No. 2, *wope*.)

401. *Mpanyimfo ye wo guanñuan, na se wuguani a, akyin no woserew wo.* (2625)

When the grown-ups (frighten you to) make you run off, and you do so, afterwards they laugh at you.

Guanñuan. Reduplication of *guan*.

402. *Akwakorā te hō ansāna wōwoo panyin.* (1877)

An old man was in the world before a chief was born.

Te. Lit. lived, see note on No. 366.

Wōwoo. Past tense, note lengthening of final vowel.

Panyin. Here in the sense of one in authority, see note on No. 1.

403. *Aberewa a onni sē no n'atadiĩe gu ne kotokum'.* (100)

The old woman with no teeth has 'tiger' nuts in her bag. (She may have some reason unknown to you for keeping them.)

Sē. The names for the teeth are: *ōbōmōfo sē* (lit. hunter's teeth), canine teeth; *nyepi*, molars; *adontēn sē* (lit. main body teeth, from military term), incisor teeth. Human teeth are valued as *sumans*.

404. *Aberewa fĩē akoko, na akoko fĩē aberewa.* (101)

The old woman looks after (her) hens and the hens look after the old woman (by laying eggs and hatching out chickens for her).

Akoko. See note on No. 199.

405. *Aberewa kō asu a, ōbēba, na nē ntem na yērepē.* (102)

When an old woman goes to fetch water (we know) she will come

back, but it is how long she will be about it that we want (to know).

Ne ntem. Here *ntem* would seem really a noun instead of an adverb; lit. her quickness (in returning).

The saying means that if old persons do things that younger people do, they must not expect any consideration on account of their age. (Cf. following.)

406. *Aberewa nim ade a, ónnye ne bañ.* (103)

If an old woman (says) she knows (every)thing, let her put up her own fence. (Cf. No. 405 above.)

Ade. See note on No. 85, *me dea*.

Ónnye. Imperative of *gye*.

407. '*Makyě, makyě,*' *kum aberewa.* (1992)

'Good morning, good morning,' (eventually) kills an old woman.

Makyě. *Me mã wo akyě,* I give you morning. The old woman, who sitting by the house all day, and having nothing to do but return salutations, is said to be killed eventually by them.

CHAPTER IX

CHIEFS, FREE MEN AND THE NOBILITY, SLAVES, THE FAMILY,
NATIONALITY, PARENTS AND RELATIONS, WOMEN AND WIVES,
MARRIAGE, BIRTH.

408. *Ohem-mone nni bābi, na ɔsafohene-bone na ɔwo bābi.* (1300)

There is no such thing anywhere as 'a bad king', though 'a bad vassal chief' may be found.

Ohem-mone = *Ohene-bone*.

Nni. Neg. of *wo*.

Osafohene. A sub- (or, vassal) chief, also in a military sense, a captain of a war company. *Oman-hene*, i.e. chief of a nation, king, is the highest title. *Ohene* is somewhat vaguely applied either to the supreme chief or king, or even to some quite small chief of a town or village, though this latter is more correctly *odekuro*, lit. holder of the village.

409. *Ohene a obekum wo mmae a, na wokañ ahene dodow a woasõm?* (1301)

When the chief who will kill you has not yet come (on the stool), can you count how many chiefs you have served under?

410. *Ohene bi bere so wohũ, na obi bere so woáyére.* (1303)

In one chief's reign skins are treated by having the hairs singed off, in that of another the skins are spread in the sun. (Times and manners change.)

Bere. Lit. time.

Woáyére. Lit. they have spread (them) out. Translated by the passive.

411. *Ohene bedi wo kasa a, efi mamfo.* (1304)

When a chief is going to compel you to do something, he does so by the authority of the people.

Bedi . . . kasa. *Di kasa*, to compel a person to pay for some wrong he has done.

Mamfo. For note on suffix *fo* see No. 78, *kontromfĩ*. *Mamfo* = *oman-fõ*.

412. *Ohene bekum wo a, ennim ahamatĩž.* (1305)

When a chief is going to kill you, it is useless consulting the lots.

Ennim. Neg. of *wo mu*.

Ahamatĩž. Lit. draw or pull the strings, see note on No. 55, *aka*.

413. *Ohene nè wo kã a, na okum wo.* (1307)

When a chief and you are on (too) intimate terms, (some day) he will kill you. (Cf. 421.)

Kã. *Me nè no kã* = he and I are friends.

414. *Ohene anim na wõnkã, na n'akyi de, wose.* (1308)

One does not speak out one's mind in the presence of a chief, but behind his back one does.

Anim. See note on No. 80, *aniwa*.

N'akyi. See note on No. 89, *akyi*.

415. *Ohene nufu dõsõ a, amansãñ na enũm.* (1309)

When a chief has plenty of milk, then all people drink of him.

Nufu. Lit. breasts, but by metonymy milk.

Enũm. Note this idiomatic use of the 3rd person sing. neuter pronoun for the 3rd person plural masc. or fem.

416. *Ohene nyã ahõtrãfo pa a, na ne bere so dõo.* (1310)

When a king has good councillors, then his reign is peaceful.

Ahõtrãfo. Deriv. *hõ* and *tẽna*, lit. one who sits beside.

Ne bere so. Lit. in his time.

Dõo. Lit. cool.

417. *Ohene nnyã wo a, na wuse, 'O nè me kã'.* (1311)

As long as a chief leaves you alone, you say, 'He and I are good friends'.

Nnyã wo. Lit. does not get (hold of) you.

418. *Ohene asõ te se 'sono asõ.* (1312)

The ears of a chief are as the ears of the elephant (i.e. he hears all that is going on).

'Sono. See note on No. 89, *esõno*.

419. *Ohene asõ te se sɔñẽ; emu akwañ boro apem.* (1313)

The ears of a chief are like a strainer; there are more than a thousand ways to them.

Sɔñẽ. An openwork basket for straining palm oil.

420. *Qhene ntam te se bayére amóá, obi ntó mu mfa nehõ tótrotō mfi adi da.* (1314)

A chief's oath is like the hole a yam is planted in, no one falls into it and gets out again unhurt.

Ntam. See note on No. 496, *wokã*.

Bayére. One of the many species of yam (*ode*).

Ntó, mfa, . . . mfi. Note the negative throughout, see note on No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.

421. *Qhene tamfo ne nea o nè no fi mmofraase.* (1315)

The enemy of a chief is he who has grown up with him from childhood. (Cf. No. 413.)

Tamfo. *T'añ*, to hate.

Mmofraase. Deriv. *mmofra, ase*.

422. *Qhene te se odum, onni anim nni akyiri.* (1317)

A chief is like an *odum* tree, he has no front and no back.

Odum. See note on No. 57, *odum*.

423. *Qhene ba ntutu 'mirika ñkofũe tiri.* (1321)

A chief's child does not run to look at a head (that has been cut off).

The heads of persons executed are brought to the chief's house.

Ntutu . . . ñkofũe. Note the two negatives, see note on No. 33, *nsisi*.

424. *Aheñkwā di adiñene na wadiñen asem.* (1322)

A chief's servant eats fish and gets ideas.

There is a play on the words *adiñene*, a fish, and *dñen*, to think, the noun from which is *adiñene*, thought. (Cf. No. 446.)

Aheñkwā = *Qhene-akoa*.

425. *Aheñkwā na omā qhene hō ye hũ.* (1324)

It is the chief's servant that causes the person of the chief to excite fear.

426. *Qsafohene nsua na wakõ.* (2756)

A war captain does not take the oath before going to fight. (Lit. in order that he may, &c.)

Qsafohene. See note on No. 306, *dqm*.

Nsua. *Sua*, to take an oath before going to fight.

The *safohene* has already taken the oath and is not required to do so again before going to war. The oath is taken as follows:

The man stands before the chief, sword in hand, the left hand being placed on the heart, pointing his sword at the chief, he swears ' *Me kã ntam kese se mekõ mamã me wura ne me sase nea mede meye obi akoa no, mekõ mato. Me soma korabo na wanko a, mede me ti me sane hõ. Se nea me kãe yi manye a, me kã ntam kese* '.

Translation—'I swear the great oath that I will fight for my king and my country rather than become any one's slave, I will fight and fall. If I fire a bullet and it will not pass (in front), I myself and my own head will go forward. If I do not do these things I swear, I take the great oath.'

427. *Ade a òhene pɛ na woyɛ mã no.* (783)

Whatever a chief wishes is done for him.

Ade. See note on No. 85, *me dea*.

Mã. Really a verb, here translated by the preposition 'for', see note on No. 240, *wɔ*.

428. *Nnipa ñhĩnã pɛ òhene aye, na (wɔanyã?) wɔannyã na wose, npo ahenni ye yaw.* (2432)

All men would like to be chief(s), but when they cannot get what they want they declare that even to rule as a chief has its worries.

Wɔannyã. The original gives this verb in the positive, but this is probably an error.

Ahenni. Deriv. *òhene di*, to rule as chief.

429. *Ade hĩa òhene nana a, okita tuo, na ɔnsoá akètɛ.* (798)

When a chief's grandson is poor, he holds a gun but he does not carry a mat.

Nana. More often *nũnã*, *ɔba* is understood, see 37, *nĩ*.

Akètɛ. To carry one's own sleeping-mat is considered very degrading.

430. *Ade hĩa ɔdehɛ a, ehĩa no kàkrã.* (797)

When a free man lacks something, it is something very big he lacks.

ɔdehɛ. Plu. *adehyɛ*, a free man, as opposed to a slave (*ɔdonko*); also used in the sense of one of good family, a nobleman.

Kàkrã. See note on No. 101, *kàkrã*.

431. *ɔdehɛ bɔ dam a, wofrɛ no asãbow.* (834)

When a man of noble family is mad, people say he is only the worse for wine.

ɔdehɛ. See note above, No. 430.

Wofre. Lit. they say.

Asabow. Deriv. *bow nsã*.

432. *Odehye diñ nyera da.* (835)

A free man's name is never lost.

433. *Odehye, wodi no apatā, na wonni no sono.* (836)

Nobility should be borne as one eats fish (humbly) and not as one partakes of elephant flesh (proudly, and boasting about it).

Apatā. Fish, dried, is a common food all over Ashanti. Elephant's meat is naturally rather a luxury, and people will give much even for a small piece just to be able to say they have eaten it.

434. *Odehye ñhyehye, na sika na ehhyehye.* (838)

Fame of being noble born does not spread abroad, it is the fame of riches that spreads.

Sika. See note on No. 591.

435. *Odehye ankõ a, akoa guañ.* (839)

When the free man does not fight, the slave runs away.

436. *Odehye mu nni abofra.* (840)

Among royalty no one is a child.

437. *Odehye, wonnõa wonni, na sika ne asem.* (841)

An ancient name cannot be cooked and eaten ; after all, money is the thing.

Wonni. Neg. of *dì*.

438. *Odehye, wompae.* (842)

A man of royal blood does not need to have his name proclaimed.

Wompae. *Pae*, used of the proclamations of the *osen*, herald.

439. *Odehye nsore, wosi no mfensã.* (843)

The offering on the grave of one of the royal house is placed there for many years.

Nsore. A burial grove. Deriv. probably *n*, not, and *sore*, to rise up ; but also by metonymy, the offering placed on the grave.

Mfensã. Lit. three years, but used for indefinite number ; see note on No. 767.

This proverb is quoted by a person who is reprimanded or reproached for not having performed some action, and is equivalent to answering, 'Oh, I have plenty of time yet in which to do that, there is no hurry'.

440. *Odehye te hɔ a, akɔa nni ade.* (844)

When the free man is there, the slave does not take command.

Nni ade. Di ade, to take possession, inherit, take command. This saying is not strictly accurate as there have been cases where the legitimate heirs have been passed over and the stool given to a slave. See proverb following.

441. *Odehye wu a, akɔa di ade.* (845)

When a free man dies, a slave succeeds. (See No. 440, note.)

442. *Odehye nye abofra na wɔabɔ ne diɛ abɔ owu diɛ.* (846)

One of royal rank is not a common fellow that he should have his name coupled with the name of Death.

Abofra. Child, boy or girl, but also used in the sense of servant, fellow.

Owu. Death personified for description, see note on No. 16, *owu*. Note, among the Ashantis it is bad etiquette, if not actually criminal, to mention the word 'death' in connexion with the name of a chief. There are many euphemisms to express 'he is dead'; e.g. *wakā nkyene gu*, lit. he has cast away salt; *okɔ asaman*, he has gone to the spirit world; *oka bābi*, he remains elsewhere. *Waye Onyankɔpɔn de*, he has become the property of Onyankopɔn.

443. *Akɔa mpaw wura.* (1625)

A slave does not choose (his) master.

Akɔa. A servant, slave, but the latter is better *ɔdonko*. *Akɔa* is also used in the sense of 'that fellow' (*akɔa no*). Slaves were probably quite well treated in Ashanti and had not much to complain of. It is true that they were liable to be sacrificed, or perhaps buried with their master on his death, but such a fate was also possible for free men. Slaves who proved themselves able could, and often did, succeed to their masters' property. Slaves, apart from those born such, might be put in three classes: (1) those who became such by having been bought or captured in war; (2) those pledged or pawned by their relatives or themselves to liquidate debts, or as security for a debt; (3) those who voluntarily placed themselves under a master for protection. To fully understand the proverbs which follow it is necessary to remember that so-called 'slavery' in Africa, as practised by the Africans themselves, was seldom or never that terrible thing with which later and exotic associations have invested the word.

'An African Slave.' The words have gained much of their

sinister meaning, to our ear, owing to the transplantation of a more or less necessary and not wholly to be pitied individual, from his indigenous surroundings (where his status in, and advantage to, the social system were assured and fully recognized), to a 'civilized' and a 'Christian' community, which had long forgotten all that thousands of years of experience in dealing with this class had taught his rude African master. The demand for slaves in the Christian markets of the world, and all the horrors that this traffic brought to Africa and to her people are apt to blind one to the fact that this 'open sore' was much of our own making. One is prevented from seeing that here, in its original home, 'slavery' (another word is almost needed to express it) did and (in a mild form, and shorn of its more glaring abuses) does much to hold together the communistic savage community till such time as education and advancement favour greater independence and individualism.

444. *Akoa ñhye nehõ ntu sa.* (1615)

A slave does not make up his own mind about going to war.

Ñhye . . . *ntu*. For use of negatives see No. 33, *mfa*, *nsisi*.

Sa. See note on No. 317, *osa*.

445. *Akoa nim wura.* (1622)

A slave knows (his) master.

446. *Akoa di guan a, ne hõ guan no.* (1612)

When a slave eats a sheep, he is in trouble.

Guan. *Oguan*, a sheep, see note on No. 17, *guan*. Besides perhaps being a play on the words *guan*, sheep, and *guan*, trouble (cf. No. 424), the proverb means that the slave who eats a sheep, that is, sacrifices it to a fetish, must be in great trouble, or have committed some crime unknown to his master, or is making some promissory offering to his fetish, in any of which circumstances his master would want to know all about it.

447. *Akoa ampow a, na efiri ʋira.* (1626)

When a slave is not well behaved, the cause can be traced to (his) master.

Ampow. The literal meaning of *põw* (often reduplicated *popow*) is to clean, polish, rub up, hence here perhaps used figuratively, polished, polite, in which sense the word is often used.

ʋira = *Wura*; *ʋira* is in the Akan dialect.

448. *Akoa nni awu na woŋkum owura.* (1619)

When a slave does not commit murder, his master is not killed.

The master was held absolutely responsible for every act of the slave, who was considered as having not only a body which was not his own, but also a mind. Hence any act of a slave was considered as an act of his master.

449. *Akoa nim sɔm a, ofa ne ti ade di.* (1620)

When a slave knows how to serve (his master well), he is permitted to take his own earnings.

Ne ti ade. Lit. his head thing, i.e. the price paid for a person or thing. Cf. *tiri nsã*, the wine placed before the parents of a girl as a legal symbol that the woman has been given in marriage.

450. *Akoa a onim sɔm di ne wura ade.* (1621)

A slave who knows how to serve succeeds to his master's property. (Cf. No. 441.)

451. *Akoa nyã nehõ a, ofrɛ nehõ Sonani.* (1623)

When a slave becomes a rich (and free) man, he calls himself one of the *Asona* family (a noble family).

Sonani. For notes on Ashanti totem and family names, see note on No. 37, *abusũa*.

452. *Akoa di fɔ.* (1611)

A slave is (as a matter of course) guilty.

453. *Akoa ñkyerɛ nnannua.* (1617)

A slave does not point out where good sticks for building are to be found.

Nnannua. Lit. house sticks, *nnan*, plu. of *ɔdan*, a house. The usual house is a framework of sticks plastered with mud. The slave on seeing suitable sticks should go and cut them, and not merely come and report, when he will only be asked why he has not brought them.

454. *Akoa nni mpow kwa.* (1618)

A slave does not eat the second yam crop without good reason.

Nni. Neg. of *di*.

Mpow. The second crop of yams; the first is called *mmoto-kroma*. This second crop is used exclusively for planting out the following season, and for a slave to eat them would mean he was contemplating flight before then.

455. *Akoa nyansa wɔ ne wura tirim.* (1624)

A slave's wisdom is in his master's head.

456. *Akoa sare asukɔ na womã ɔkɔ a, oguan.* (1627)

When a slave has ceased to go for water and is (again) made to go, he runs away.

Sare asukɔ. *Asukɔ*, the verbal noun from *kɔ*, to go, and *asu*, water. *Sare*, to give up doing something one has been in the habit of doing. Here a slave, who had become so far a privileged person that he was no longer 'the hewer of wood and drawer of water', on being ordered to become so again, would consider himself so badly treated that he would try and escape and find a new master. The saying means that a privilege once granted is difficult to withdraw.

457. *Akoa te sɛ kyekyire, wode nsu kakra gu no so a, na ahono.* (1628)

A slave is like unto corn ground into flour; when a little water is sprinkled on it, it becomes soft. (A slave is easily influenced by kind treatment.)

Kyekyire. Indian corn roasted and ground. (The original, No. 1628 in 'Tshi Proverbs', has *kyekyere* for *kyekyire* in error.)

458. *Akoa te sɛ tɔ̃vɛrebo; enni otuo ano a, enye 'ye.* (1629)

A slave is like the flint on the striker of the gun which, if it were wanting, would make the gun useless. (He is a necessary member of the community.)

Tɔ̃vɛrebo. See No. 339.

Enni. Neg. of *wɔ*.

'Ye = *Yiye*.

459. *Wo ñkoa suro wo anim asem a, wonni ñm mmã wo.* (1630)

If your slaves fear (to speak) before your face, they will not gain victories for you.

Wonni. Neg. of *di*. *Di ñm* or *nkõñm*, to win a fight.

Mmã. See note on No. 727 and No. 14.

460. *Ngoñkofo bānu fɛ̃ nantɔ̃i a, ɔkom kum no.* (976)

When two slaves look after (your) cow, hunger kills it.

Ngoñkofo. *Ngoñko*, the Ashanti name for the country to the north of Salaga, now the 'Northern Territory' of the Gold Coast. *Fo*, a personal suffix, see note on No. 78, *kontromfɛ̃*. As many of the slaves used to come from here, the word *Ngoñkofo*, sing.

odonkonì, came to be synonymous with *akoa*, slave, and used entirely in that sense.

461. '*Ahĩa me na fũe mã me,*' *nti na obi yee akoa.* (1335)

'I am in want, so look after me,' that is why some men became slaves (lit. one became a slave).

Yee. Past tense, formed by lengthening of final vowel.

Akoa. See note on No. 443, *akoa*. This comes under class 3.

462. *Owura nè akoa ntam' nni,* '*tũẽ mã mentũẽ*'. (3501)

Between master and slave there is no 'pull and let me pull' (no striving for the mastery).

463. *Wo wura tañ wo a, na ofre wo akoa dehye.* (3503)

When your master hates you, then he calls you a free-born slave.

Akoa dehye. A slave who was originally free-born, but through debt or some other misfortune lost his original status; see note on No. 443, *akoa*. The slave mentioned here comes under class 2.

464. *Obi ntɔ akoa na ommehye no so.* (352)

No one buys a slave to act as a restraint on himself.

Ntɔ . . . ommehye. Note the double negative, see note on No. 33, *nsisi*. *Mme*, neg. of auxiliary verb *bẽra*.

Hye . . . so, to press on; hence, to oppress.

465. *Wunni wura a, obi kyere wo, tɔñ, di.* (921)

When you have no master, some one catches you and sells you for what you will fetch.

Wunni. Neg. of *wɔ*.

Tɔñ, di. Lit. sell, eat, i.e. sell and use the proceeds.

466. *Wofere wo afĩnã a, wudi nnuañfĩñ.* (1115)

When you fear to reprimand your slave girl, you eat stale food.

Wofere. See note on No. 155, *mfere*.

Nnuañfĩñ. *Nnuañ*, *aduañ*, and *fĩñ*, not *fĩ*, bad.

This proverb might almost seem to be spoken by some mistress in Mayfair, worried by the servant problem and fearful lest her cook takes offence and gives notice.

467. *Akoa għantanni, wode no sie funu.* (1614)

A proud slave is taken and buried with the corpse (of his master).

It was the custom in Ashanti in the old days, when a chief or any one of importance died, to kill slaves, wives, and attendants, to

accompany their master to the spirit world, *asaman* (see No. 35, *osaman*). As soon as the chief breathed his last, and before the news of his death was publicly announced, two slaves, generally girls, were taken to where the corpse was laid out for washing and killed, either by strangulation or by having their necks broken across a stick; this was known as *yi aquare*, 'to remove from the bathing (place)'. After the body had been washed and decked in all its finest cloths, another victim was killed at the entrance to the house by having his throat cut (first having the *sepow* knife driven through his tongue and cheeks to prevent him swearing any oath), the blood being allowed to fall on the drums. Chiefs were often buried sitting on the shoulders of a man who thus standing was entombed alive. Before burying or killing the different victims they were each assigned their duties in the next world which they had to perform for their dead master.

468. *Obi nhũ bi kwaberañ ñhuruw nsi.* (187)

No one sees a strong slave belonging to another man and jumps for joy about it.

Nhũ, ñhuruw, nsi. For this idiom see note on No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.

Kwaberañ = Akoa-oberañ.

469. *Obi akoa di péreguañ na womã asũāsũ to no a, oyi kaw sũā mã wutua.*

When some one's slave who is worth a *péreguañ* of gold dust (£8) is sold to you for an *asũāsũ*'s worth (about £6), he is pretty sure to go and incur some debt for a *sũā*'s worth (about £2) that you will have to pay.

Péreguañ, asũāsũ, sũā. See note on No. 591, *nsenã*, for notes on Ashanti weights.

470. *Abusũa ñhñã ye abusũa, na ye fũefũe mmetẽmã so de.* (683)

All family names are family names (and good enough at that), but we search well between the thorns of the oil palm for the good nuts nevertheless.

Abusũa. A family or clan name traced through the female line. See note on No. 37, *abusũa*.

Mmetẽmã. Deriv. *betem*, a cluster, and *mma*, plu. of *oba*, child, lit. cluster of children, i.e. bunch of palm nuts.

471. *Abusũa te se ñfũvireñ, egugu akuw-akuw.* (684)

Family names are like flowers, they blossom in clusters.

472. *Abusũa ye dom, na wo nã oba ne wo nua.* (685)

The family is an army, and your own mother's child is your real kinsman (brother or sister).

See note on *abusũa*, No. 37.

Nã. See note on No. 37, *nã*.

Nua. See note on No. 37, *nũ*.

473. *Abusũa dua, wontĩvá.* (686)

The family tree is not cut.

474. *Nea oman bi kã sereu na oman bi kã sũ.* (2199)

What one people talk and laugh about, another people talk and cry about.

Oman. A nation, a people. Used, however, also in the sense of a town, and the people of that town. This probably is its original meaning, the various towns or villages possibly under independent chiefs gradually coming under a central authority, the *oman-hene*.

475. *Oman rebebo a, efi afi mu.* (1996)

When a nation is about to come to ruin, the cause begins in the homes (of its people).

Ofi. See note on No. 262, *fi*.

476. *Oman bo, na menné abobow.* (1998)

A nation is (can be) destroyed, how much more one home (lit. a gate).

Menné. Neg. of *de*.

Abobow. See note on No. 495.

477. *Oman Akuapem, wokonyã ade a, wose, 'Obusufo!', nso woannyã a, wose 'Okãrabiri!'* (1999)

The Akuapem people say, when you get wealthy, 'Mischievous fellow!', and when you have nothing, they say 'Unlucky one!'.

Okãrabiri. Lit. black soul. See note on No. 147.

478. *Oman kum wo a, na ohene kum wo.* (2000)

When (the united) people (want to) kill you, then the chief kills you.

479. *Ɔman te se adesoa, woihũ mu ade dakoro.* (2001)

A people are like unto a load (containing many things), you cannot perceive all the contents in a single day.

Adesoa. Lit. *ade*, a thing, and *soa*, to carry, something carried, a load.

Mu ade. Almost a compound word, lit. 'the in-it things', i.e. contents.

480. *Ɔman tiwa wo sãmã a, wompopa.* (2002)

When it is the unanimous wish of a people that you dress your hair in a certain way, you are compelled to do so (lit. you do not rub it out).

Sãmã. Various patterns cut on the hair of the head.

481. *Ɔman rebebo a, Ɔmãmpãm na ókùra pòma.* (1997)

When a nation is about to come to ruin, then the salamander holds the staff.

Ɔmãmpãm. The salamander. The name in Ashanti means literally 'mend nation' (*pam Ɔman*), i.e. unite, join together in harmony and peace. The following is the Ashanti story of how it came to get this name.

The salamander was formerly known as the *Boaman* (i.e. break-up nations). This name he was given by the *esono*, elephant, who is supposed, according to this story, to have given all the animals their names. The salamander protested against being given this name, but in vain, so he went off and adopted the following plan in order to get it altered. He went alternately to the chiefs of the *Nkrañ* (*Accra*) and *Akuapem* nations, and told each in turn that the other was about to attack him, and these nations were on the point of going to war. It transpired, however, that the salamander was the real cause of all the trouble, and he was caught and asked to give an explanation of his false reports. He freely acknowledged what he had done, but pleaded justification in his name, *Boaman* (destroy nations). His excuse was accepted, but his name was altered from *Boaman* to his present one, *Mãmãm* (unite nations).

The salamander is said by the natives to be deaf; in the saying above he is represented as the *okyẽme*. The staff held by a chief's *okyẽme*, that is, spokesman, is generally bound round with the skin of the salamander (as a kind of 'sympathetic' magic, no doubt).

The word *okyeāme* is universally spoken of and rendered as 'linguist' by the Europeans in this colony. It has of course nothing to do with linguist (i.e. one skilled in languages). The *okyeāme* is a court official who acts as the mouthpiece of the chief; etiquette neither allowing a chief to speak directly to, or be spoken to directly by, his subjects. The idea of linguist or interpreter is entirely foreign to the word. The *okyeāme* need not, and probably does not, know any language but his own, and if the word is to be rendered in English at all, it should be by the word, spokesman.

482. '*Agya, gyae na meñkã,*' *wokyi.* (1238)

'Father, stop, and let me tell (you what you ought to do)', it is not permitted to speak so.

Agya. See note on No. 37, *nĩ*.

Meñkã. Imperative.

Wokyi. See notes on No. 89, *akyi*, and No. 132, *wokyi*.

483. *Agya mma nyã a, mepe ; enã mma nyã a, mepe papāpa.* (1239)

When (my) father's children get (anything), I like that ; when (my) mother's children get (anything), I like that even better.

Agya mma. Children of your own father but by another mother, and therefore, as descent is traced through the female line, not considered as your *onũa* (i.e. brother or sister by *your own* mother). See note on terms of relationship, No. 37, *abusũa*.

Enã mma. Children of one's own mother. See note above.

Papāpa. The word *pa* means good, well ; here lit. good, good, good, the word being repeated to make a superlative or express emphasis. It is also used in the sense of 'real', 'genuine', see No. 44 and No. 135.

484. '*M'agya dea, mēmfa, me nã dea mēmfa,*' *na eberẽ aĩi.* (1243)

'It is my father's, so let me take it ; it is my mother's, so let me take it', that brings (a child) to stealing.

Dea. Not to be confused with *dea* = *nea*, he who. Here *de*, with the enclitic *a*, probably giving emphasis, is the possessive. See note on No. 85, *me dea*.

485. *Wo agya akoo tĩa dua a, wuse,* '*Eye merew*'. (1244)

When your father's slave cuts down a tree, you say, 'It is soft wood (easy to cut)'.

486. *Wo nã ba ne Kobuobi a, aikã wobese sɛ kyene kese futa no ana?*
(2060)

Even if your mother's son is 'Kobuobi', would you tell him that the big drum was a fit thing for him to carry?

Kobuobi. The prefix *ko*, before proper nouns, is a contraction for *odonko*, a slave (q. v. No. 460, *nnonkofo*), and is added as a kind of nickname to the name of a person of slave or humble origin, and also to those of children whose brothers or sisters have all died. *Kobuobi*, that is, slave boy *Buobi* may be in duty bound to carry the big drum, but being your own real brother you would not want to taunt him with the fact.

See also note on No. 138. This and many other of the proverbs tend to show how strong is the idea of relationship on the mother's side alone.

487. *Wo nã oba ne wo nuu.* (2061)

Your mother's child is your kinsman (brother or sister).

See note on No. 37, *abusã*, and above.

488. *Wo nã di hã a, wunnyae no ñkɔfa obi nyɛ nã.* (2063)

When your mother is poor, you do not leave her and go and make some one else your mother. (Cf. No. 492.)

Nã. See note on No. 37, *nã*.

Wunnyae, ñkɔfa. Note the negatives, see No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.

489. *Wo nã aikɔ gua a, na womãnã wo nã né kòra.* (2064)

When your own mother does not go to market, then your step-mother is sent.

Wo nã né kora, a step-mother. It must, of course, be remembered that the Ashantis are polygamous, so that a child, besides its own mother, may have anything from one to several hundreds of step-mothers. See note on No. 345, *kora*.

490. *Wo nã wu na wobeyɛ ayi a, didi ɔ̃ie ansã, na ñkɔto piti na wo ani ñkowu mpanyimfo anim.* (2067)

When your mother has died and you are about to celebrate the funeral custom, finish eating first, lest you go and faint and shame yourself before the elders.

Didi ɔ̃ie. See note on *wutiwa* . . . *ɔ̃ie*, No. 137.

Ani ñkowu. See note on No. 33, *mfa, nsisi*.

491. *Wo nã awu a, wo abusũa asã.* (2068)

When your mother dies, you have no kindred left.

See note on No. 37, *abusũa*.

492. *Wo nã nye a, na wo nã ara neñ.* (2069)

Even if your mother is not a good woman, she is your mother nevertheless. (Cf. No. 488.)

Neñ = *ne no*.

493. *Wudi wo agya akyi a, wusũa ne nantew.* (898)

When you follow behind your father, you learn to walk like him.

494. *Wunni nã na woko obi fi agoro a, na otu ne mma fo a, wode tu wohõ bi.* (912)

When you have no mother and you go to some one's house to play, and she (the mother) admonishes her children, you profit by some of that advice yourself.

Agoro. A verbal noun, (for) playing.

495. *Agorũ a ereba wo nã nè wo agya abóbów āno nó, wompe ntem ñkofwe.* (1211)

The dance which is coming to your mother's and your father's door, you do not go off in haste to look at elsewhere.

Abóbów. The entrance to the square or open courtyard round which the houses of an Ashanti family are built.

Wompe . . . *ñkofwe*. Note the double negative; see note on No. 33, *mfa*, *nsisi*.

496. *Wokã wo agya a, wokã wo nã bi.* (1489)

When you swear the oath of your father, you should also swear that of your mother.

Wokã. *Ntam* is understood.

Several kinds of oaths are to be recognized. First, there is the common form of oath taken at ordeals, where a man swears by his particular 'fetish' that he is speaking the truth, and calls on it to punish him if he is in the wrong. This form of oath is too well known to require a detailed description.

The second form is less well known. Like the first it is also a form of legal procedure.

Me kã ntam, 'I swear the oath of so-and-so'. These are the words said by an Ashanti man or woman who has a dispute with another. Let us suppose two people are quarrelling, words run

high, perhaps blows follow, suddenly one of the persons fighting says to the other, 'I swear the oath of (whoever it may be) that I am in the right'. There and then the matter ends for the time being, for by saying these words the quarrel has been removed from the sphere of a private dispute, with a possibility of a private settlement, to become a purely public affair to be heard and settled in the court of the chief whose oath has been sworn. Students of Roman Private Law will notice the curious resemblance in this procedure to the *LEGIS ACTIO SACRAMENTUM*, which was also a method of removing a dispute from the sphere of private settlement and securing a trial *in judicio*. Now the meaning of this oath is as follows. The person who used the oath mentioned some particular day on which local tradition has ascribed some dire calamity to have happened to the family of the tribal chief. Each local chief may have such a black day. When a person mentions such a day, which subject is ordinarily taboo, it behoves the head of the family, whose unlucky day has been thus recalled, to investigate the whole matter under dispute, and, if necessary, punish the person who has wrongly used the power or dread of this event to prove his case. It has been seen that one of the litigants 'swears the oath', it is now the duty of the other party to answer it (*bo ntam so*), lit. 'beat on the oath', that is, also swear the same oath that he is in the right. Should the second party fail to do so, the case is simply given against him, no evidence or witnesses being required, the mere fact that he refuses to respond to the oath proving him to be in the wrong. Should, however, the oath be duly answered, then the case will be heard in open court. Heavy fees attach to these oaths, each party putting down his 'oath fee'. The fee of the party who wins the case will be returned to him, that of the other party is forfeited to the chief. It is thought that, did a chief whose oath has been taken refuse to investigate the case, a similar calamity would befall his family. The swearing of an oath constitutes a form of appeal to a higher court. Not being satisfied with the judgement of one court, a person can appeal to a higher by swearing the oath of the next most important chief, the oath in this case being sworn against the *okyêame* or spokesman of the chief who gave judgement and not against the original party to the suit. In this manner appeals can be carried right up to the court of the paramount chief by the swearing of the 'great oath' (*ntam kese*). This is the equivalent

of saying, '*Memeneda Koromante*', i.e. 'Koromante Saturday'. *Koromante* is a place on the Fantee coast where Osai Panyin of Coomassie was defeated and slain by the Fantees. This calamity was considered so terrible that even the name came to be proscribed and became known as simply *ntam kese*, the great oath.

Other important oaths are *Akantamansu*, from the name of a battle near Dodowa, where Osai Yao of Coomassie and many other chiefs were defeated and slain.

Wukuda, Wednesday's oath, is another.

An interesting modern example is *Abanakyi*, lit. after or behind the castle, castle being used as the personification of the English Government; this oath referring to the last rising in 1900 in Ashanti.

Any man who was about to be executed was usually pierced through both cheeks by a skewer-like knife (*sepow*), which prevented him from 'swearing the king's oath', which would have necessitated the delay of an investigation and trial before he could be executed.

The third form of oath is perhaps more of the nature of a curse. By it a person invokes the death of the king, the words used being the simple formula, '*Obosom nkum ohene*,' 'May a fetish kill the king'. So terrible a crime is this considered that in describing it the custom is to say, 'he blessed (or, sprinkled) the sacred *edwira*' on the king. When the writer was endeavouring to ascertain the exact curse used, he had great difficulty in getting his native informant to repeat it, and finally only got him to do so accompanied by loud cracking of his (the native's) fingers round the ears.

Now any one who thus 'blessed' the king was without exception and without possibility of pardon, killed. But a curious custom is in vogue. The curser is permitted to name (within reasonable limits) the day and manner of his death, and during this interval is granted absolute licence. He can demand any man's wife, money, and goods, to use and do as he likes with till the day of his death.

In this custom we have one of the most powerful checks on the personal despotism of kings and chiefs; for on one occasion on which a man was driven by the treatment he had received from the chief or king to 'bless' him, with the consequent upsetting of the social régime resulting from the licence granted, the person on whom the exasperated populace sought vengeance was the ruler

who had by his despotism driven his distracted victim to prefer death to life.

A somewhat similar idea runs through the well-known custom of committing suicide, but before doing so ascribing the cause to some particular person who is thereby compelled to commit suicide himself, or again, the custom of swearing an oath on a person that he must kill you, when the person on whom the oath is sworn is in the predicament of having to choose between violating the oath or committing what will be considered and punished as murder.

497. *Obi mfi bea akyi ntu ne tam.* (170)

No one can pull the loin-cloth off a woman without her knowledge.

Mfi . . . akyi. Lit. to come behind one's back and do a thing, i.e. to do without one's knowledge.

498. *Ob̄ea k̄o aguare na wamma ntem a, na osiesie nehõ.* (23)

When a woman goes to bathe and is a long time in returning, then (you can be sure) she is decking herself out.

Aguare. A verbal noun. See note on No. 353, *hohoro*.

499. *Ob̄ea tenten̄ so ab̄e a, q̄iwam di.* (25)

When a tall girl carries palm nuts, the toucan eats (them).

Ob̄ea tenten̄. The Ashanti women are shorter in stature than the men, and the expression 'tall girl' here implies a woman who does things unbecoming her sex, or who is shameless.

Q̄iwam di. The saying, *āiwam bedi wo mme*, 'the toucans will eat your palm nuts', is a common expression among the Ashantis, meaning 'some trouble will befall you'.

500. *Mmea nhĩnā ye bākõ.* (27)

All women are alike.

501. *Mmea n'nyae ankā aguare, na ahohow hõ b̄on.* (28)

Let women cease to bathe with limes, for even the (*ahohow*) red ant has an offensive smell.

Ahohow. A small red ant that lives in the branches of trees and which is found in lime trees. They have a nasty smell. The native women are very fond of using limes to rub their bodies with, perhaps to get rid of the smell that seems inherent in the black man and woman however clean they may be. The saying means, anything inherent in one cannot be got rid of by artificial means.

502. *Mmea pe nea sika wo.* (29)

Where the gold dust is, that is where the women like to be.

Sika. See note on No. 591.

503. *Mmea se, 'Wo hõ ye fe' a, ene kà.* (30)

When the women say (to you) 'You are a handsome fellow', that means you are going to run into debt.

Ka. Ashanti. The Twi dialect has *kaw*, see No. 54.

504. *Obā hõ ye fe a, efi ne kunu.* (19)

When a woman is beautiful, it is from her husband she gets her beauty.

Meaning perhaps that he has bought her the ornaments or fine clothes that make her look beautiful.

505. *Obā na onim kunu.* (20)

It is the woman who knows her husband.

Na. Here emphatic, see note on No. 1.

506. *Obā nyinseñ na waiwo bā a, owo baniñ.* (21)

When a woman conceives and does not give birth to a girl, she gives birth to a boy.

507. *Obā tĩa bommā a, etĩveri barima dai mu.* (22)

Even when a woman makes (lit. cuts) a drum, it leans against the man's house.

Tĩa. To cut; here refers to the tree from which the wooden portion of the drum has been made.

Women have nothing to do with drums in Ashanti, either the carrying or beating.

The following brief notes on drumming are only intended to draw attention to this interesting subject. The writer hopes to discuss the matter more fully in some other work.

A great deal is heard in Africa about the wonderful way in which news can be passed on over great distances in an incredibly short space of time. It has been reported that the news of the fall of Khartum was known among the natives of Sierra Leone the same day, and other equally wonderful instances are quoted to show that the native has some extraordinary rapid means of communicating important events. It must, however, be remembered that most of the instances that one hears quoted are incapable of

verification, and would, moreover, probably be found to have been much exaggerated. Having said this much, however, it must be admitted that these natives have a means of intercommunication which often inspires wonder and curiosity on the part of Europeans. One of such means of communication is by drumming.

This idea the European will readily grasp, and being familiar with various means of *signalling*, will suppose that some such a method might be adapted to drums; but among the Ashantis the drum is not used as a means of *signalling* in the sense that we would infer, that is by rapping out words by means of a prearranged code, but (to the native mind) is used to sound or speak the actual words.

That is, we have drum-talking as distinct from drum-signalling, a *tympanophonic* as opposed to a *tympanosemantic* means of communication. Tympanophony, or drum-talking, is an attempt to imitate by means of two drums (a 'male' and a 'female') set in different keys the exact sound or words of the human voice.

(Such an idea does not appear nearly so far-fetched to the native mind as it might to a European, accustomed as the former is to ascribe even the sounds made by birds and some animals to attempts at human speech.)

We have all perhaps experienced the sensation that bells were ringing out *words*, and the classical example of 'Punch brothers punch' will occur to many, and children have a game where one plays a tattoo on another's back, beating harder and harder till the one who is acting the part of drum guesses the tune played.

These childish examples illustrate exactly what the Ashanti drummer strives to do with his drums.

Now the question naturally arises as to the limitations of this means of communication. Can the drum be made to say anything, or are the messages drummed restricted to certain preconceived and prearranged words or rather sentences? As far as the writer has been able to discover, the drummers' vocabulary is more or less restricted to the latter class of messages, but this point requires further investigation.

These drummers are trained from childhood, and must not only be experts in drumming, but also have learned the traditions and genealogies of all the kings, and the folk-lore of the tribe as contained in the proverbs, for it would seem that most of the sentences drummed come under these two headings.

The subject is one of absorbing interest, but only the briefest description can here be given.

The classes of messages sent come under several heads.

1. The names and deeds of each king or chief who has occupied the tribal stool as far back as tradition has any memory of. Drumming thus serves as an important way of perpetuating the tribal memory.

2. Messages addressed to the various materials from which the drums are made, the particular tree from which cut, the elephant from whose ear the tense membrane is made, the wood from which the pegs are made, the creeper used to tie down the skin. An appeal is also always made to a mythical divine drummer for permission to drum. This class of messages always precedes any drumming.

3. Many of the best-known proverbs are drummed, and among the commonest to be thus perpetuated are those in which *ONYA-NKŌPŌŃ* (a Supreme Being) figures. This the writer considers of considerable interest and importance as proving that the native name and conception of a High God is not derived from the Europeans. (See note on *Onyàmé*, No. 1.)

4. Alarms, especially fire.

5. War messages generally insulting, and not, as one might suppose, messages giving instructions as to movements of troops or orders to war captains. The Ashantis account for such messages not being, as it were, in 'the code book' by saying that any such orders would have to be delivered secretly, and not 'shouted out' for the enemy to hear.

A few examples taken from the hundreds of messages that an expert drummer can send will now be given.

The words and sentences are rapped out on two drums placed side by side. The drummer squats beside them with a drumstick in each hand. The tones of the drums are pitched in different keys. The message is rapped out with extraordinary rapidity and skill, the endeavour being to imitate the intonation usually given to the particular sentence to be drummed, each syllable of a word being represented by a beat on one or the other or both of the drums.

The following are drum messages beaten at the Wednesday and Sunday *adai* held in honour of the departed chiefs, on which occasion the ancestral stools are carried forth to the burial ground. (See note on No. 388, *akonivua*.)

First, as is always the case when the drums are brought out, the drummer propitiates or condoles with each separate part of which the composite drum is formed. (It is worthy of note that many words in these messages are now archaic and the meaning is not known even to the drummers.)

Q-ba-yi-fo, o-do-man-ko-ma, kye-re-ma se, o-re-se-re, wo, ba-bi, a-gyi-na.

O wizard, the sacred drummer says he craves of you a place to stand.

The meaning is that the drummer asks permission from the wizard (see note on No. 56, *obayifo*) to drum. A drummer when he makes a mistake in the message he is sending, attributes the error to the interference of an evil spirit. Such an error on the part of a drummer is punished by the fine of a sheep. (It will be noted that this form of drumming is almost entirely ceremonial or religious.)

Twe-re-bo-a, Ko-di-a, Bi-rim-pon, o-do-man-ko-ma, kye-re-ma, se, o-ko-o, ba-bi, a, wa-ma ne hõ m-me-re-so, fir-im-pon, da-mir-i-fa, da-mir-i-fa, da-mir-i-fa!

O cedar tree (from which the drum is made), the mighty one, the divine drummer says he had gone elsewhere for a while, but that now he has returned, pity, pity, pity.

Here the wooden portion of the drum is condoled with.

O-bu-a, yen-kye-re-du, o-do-man-ko-ma, kye-re-ma, se, o-ko-o, ba-bi, a, wa-ma ne hõ m-me-re-so fi-rim-pon, da-mir-i-fa, da-mir-i-fa, da-mir-i-fa!

O *obua* tree (from which the pegs are cut that hold down the skin), the divine drummer says he had gone elsewhere for a while, but now he has returned, pity, pity, pity.

Bo-fu-mu, am-pa-se-kyi, o-do-man-ko-ma, kye-re-ma se, . . . (as before).

O *bofumu apasekyi* (the tree from which the bark is stripped to make the string with which the skin is fastened down to the pegs), the divine drummer says . . . (as before).

A-fe-ma, dun-si-ni, ne, a-sa-re n-kon-ta, o-do-man-ko-ma kye-re-ma, se . . . (as before).

O *afana* tree (from which the drumsticks are cut), the divine drummer says . . . (as before).

E-so-no, o-bu, a-ku-ma, o-do-man-ko-ma, kye-re-ma, se, . . . (as before).

O elephant (lit. the great one), breaker of the axe, the divine drummer says . . . (as before).

Here the elephant, from whose ear the membrane of the drum is made, is propitiated. This concludes the propitiation of the drum, and this prelude being over the real business on hand will begin, namely, the mentioning of each chief's name and his deeds; there are only given one or two examples out of the many that exist.

A-si-a-ma-T'o-ku-A-sa-re, o-twe-a-du-am-poñ, o-nyà-mé, o-do-man-ko-ma, kye-re-ma, se, o-kò-o, ba-li, a, wa-ma, ne-ho, m-me-re, so, o-bo-o, de-en, o-bo-o o-señ, na, o-bo-o, o-kye-re-ma, na o-bo-o, o-bra-fo ti-ti-ri.

Asiama-Toku-Asare (the first king who sat on the stool of Mam-poñ), Supreme Being, God (see note on *Qnyàmé*, No. 1), the divine drummer says he had gone elsewhere, but has now returned. What did He create; He created the herald, He created the drummer, but above all He created the executioner.

It is worthy of note here that we have two of the names of the Supreme Being introduced in connexion with the name of the first ancestor of the chiefs of Mam-poñ. It is extremely unlikely that this would be so, did their names and the sense in which they are understood, date only from the advent of the missionary.

The drummer thus runs through the whole line of ancestors of the chiefs right down to the reigning king, now and again a word or a sentence throws a flash of light on some forgotten custom, and every message has stamped on it signs of having been handed down from a distant past.

Here is another example :

O-do-man-ko-ma, bo-o, a-de, Bo-re Bo-re bo, a-de, o-bo de, e-beñ, o-bo-o o-señ, o-bo-o, kye-re-ma, o-bo-o, Ku-a-ku, Ak-wa, bo-a-fo ti-ti-ri Ko-nin-sa-mo-agya, Gya-me, A-mo-a-gya e-señ, be-gye, wo, fo-kye, o-gya, wo de e-beñ o-gya, wo, a-ka-bu, o-gya, wo a-to-per-e o-gya, wo, Gya-me, A-m-poñ-sa-kyi, A-m-poñ-sa, Mam-poñ, A-som Gyi-ma, bi-rem-poñ fi-rim-poñ, da-mir-i-fa, da-mir-i-fa, da-mir-i-fa !

The Supreme Being created things, the Creator created things, what things did He create? He created the herald, He created the drummer, He created *Kwaku Akwa* (meaning unknown), but chiefly He created the executioner, *Koninsamoagya, Gyame, Amoagya*

(meaning unknown), Herald, come and get your black monkey-skin hat, what did he leave you? he left you *akabu* (meaning obscure) he left you death of a thousand cuts, he left you *Gyame Amponsakyi* (a name?) *Amponsa Mampōñ*, *Asom Gyima*, mighty one, *firimpon* (?) woe, woe, woe!

(*Asom Gyima* was the 8th king of *Mampōñ*.)

A message to summon people when a fire is raging in a town runs as follows :

Mam-pōñ kon-ton-kyi, o-bo, a, e-lĩ a-ku-mã, mo, m-mã, mo-hõ, m'-me-re-so, o-gya hu-reñ! hu-reñ! hu-reñ!

Mampōñ (an important town in Ashanti), *kontonkyi* (archaic), the stone that has worn out the axe, arise, fire raging! raging! raging!

Note, the allusion to a stone wearing out an axe almost certainly refers to the grinding of celts or axe-heads, though the Ashantis have no recollection of a stone age, calling all such stone axes, 'God's axes'.

Finally, the following is selected out of many messages used in time of war. As already stated, in an actual engagement messages to the various companies are sent by the general by means of heralds and the *abrafo* executioners, the drums being used to encourage the men and insult the enemy.

... First come the names of famous chiefs, then, *wa-kum n-nipa mã n-ni-pa ye de-e-beñ, wa-kum, n-ni-pa, ma n-ni-pa ye su-man, a-boa-a, dom-po, se, o-da, wo, a-se, ne, m-mer-e-bo-se-e, n-yañ-kom-pa-sa-kyi, Kwa-ku, A-gyai, se, o-da, wo, ase o-n-wi-ni kō, dwo, a, o-du, wo, ase, u-de kō-kye, a-no-pa-nso, a, o-da, wo ase A-ku-run-to, o-kye-na, ye-be-kum, wo, a-no-pa he-ma, he-ma, he-ma.*

... Men are slain that they should become what? men are slain that they should become ghosts, the animal the dog says he is very grateful to you for that thick lump of your liver, the vulture too, he says he thanks you very much, he thanks you in the evening when the sun is cool, when the day dawns he thanks you, hailing you, *Akuranto!* We shall kill you to-morrow early, early, early.

508. *Wo yere a onye no, na ete se obi aguumañ.*

When your wife is a woman of no morals, then she might as well be some one else's harlot.

509. *Wo yere anyiñ a, wuntutu 'mirika na ekohyia no.* (3649)
Before your wife has reached puberty you do not run to meet her.
Anyiñ. Lit. has not grown. Euphemistically used for a girl reaching puberty. Quite little girls are married and go to live with their husbands, cooking and engaging in the household work, though the man does not usually have sexual intercourse till she 'grows up'.
510. *Wo yereuom anum a, wo tekrema anum.* (3650)
When you have five wives, you have five tongues.
511. *Wo yere apem a, wo asem apem.* (3651)
When you have a thousand wives, you have a thousand 'palavers'.
512. *Obea nè ne kunu asem, obi nnim mu.* (24)
The conversation between husband and wife no one knows about.
513. *Oyere te se kũntũ; wódè katá wo sò a, wo hõ keka wo, wuyi gu ho nso a, awow de wo.* (3652)
A wife is like a blanket; when you cover yourself with it, it irritates you, and yet if you cast it aside you feel cold.
514. *Oyere nye nãm na woakyeke amãñã.* (3653)
A wife is not meat that she should be parcelled up and sent out to others.
Woakyeke. The original has *woakyeke*, but the common word in use is, *kyeke amãñã*, to tie up and send.
515. *Wo yere nye a, ente se wo ñkõ wo da.* (3654)
Even if your wife be a bad lot, that is not to say you are going to sleep alone.
Nye. Lit. is notgood, meaning she is unfaithful.
516. *Asem a wontumi ñkã no abonten so no, wo nè wo yere te fie a, ñkã ñkyere no.* (2858)
When you have anything to say which could not be spoken on the street, do not tell it to your wife when you and she are together at home.
517. *Woko na obi nè ne yere rekõ a, mpe ntem mmua, na ewo nea waye no.* (1580)
When you go (to a man's house) and find him fighting with his

wife, do not be in a hurry to interfere, for there is probably a good reason for his doing so.

518. *Nea ɔrefiweɔfwe yere nto mmea hɔ̃ mpɛ̃.* (2162)

One who is looking out for a wife does not speak contemptuously of women.

519. *Aware fɔforo sa ɔde.* (3434)

On the honeymoon the yams always taste sweet. (Lit. (in) a new marriage, the yams mix well.)

520. *Wowo ba bone a, wɔfa ɔkasabɛ̃re.* (3463)

When you give birth to a bad child, you (will) grow weary of speaking.

521. *Wowo nipa, na wɔawo ne tamfo.* (3464)

A man is brought forth; his enemy has (already) been born.

Wowo, wɔawo. Note the different tenses, present, and aorist.
Tamfo = *Taɲ* and *fo*.

522. *Wowoo tafoni ba no, na onkura ta.* (3465)

When the archer was born, he did not hold a bow.

Tafoni. In the original this is written with a capital, which would give it the meaning of a *Tafoni* man, (there is a town of this name). The Ashantis, before the introduction of flintlock guns from Europe, fought with bows and arrows and shields. There is even now a street in Coomassie known as *ɔkyem* (shield) street. Bows and arrows are now only seen as 'survivals' in the toys the little children play with, and a shield is a royal emblem of the paramount king of Ashanti. (See No. 29.)

523. '*Mawo wo mabɛ̃re,*' *wokyi.* (3467)

'I am weary of having born you' is something no one ever wants to say.

Wokyi. See note on No. 89, *akyi*, and No. 132, *wokyi*.

524. *Obi ɲhyee da ɲwoo panyin peɲ.* (194)

No one ever yet fixed on a particular day to give birth to an elder (i. e. a man who was to be of importance some day).

ɲhyee . . . ɲwoo. Past tenses. For the negative see note on No. 33, *mfa*, *nsisi*.

525. *Wowoo ' Wo di anim ' Kwasida, na wowoo ' Wo yi adžow ' Džoda.*
(3466)

The greedy person was born on Sunday and the extortioner on Monday.

(That is, the greedy person and the extortioner are very much akin to each other; or perhaps it may mean the greedy person may find what he has stored up by his greed taken from him by the extortioner. Both interpretations are found given.)

Wo di anim. The literal translation runs, 'You are greedy' was born, &c., &c.; 'You are an extortioner' was born, &c., &c.

Kwasida . . . Džoda. There are seven days in the week and twelve months in the year.

The origin of the names of these days the writer has been unable to trace. This origin probably dates back to remote antiquity. Every Ashanti child born has, as one of its names, a name derived from the particular day on which he or she was born.

CHAPTER X

STRANGERS, EUROPEANS AND EUROPE.

526. *Ohoho akyi mpa asem.* (1403)

After a stranger has gone there is always something to be said about him (good or bad).

Ohoho. A stranger. Deriv. perhaps the reduplication of the demonstrative *eho*, there, in the distance, far away; lit. 'one from over there'.

Akyi. See note on No. 89.

Mpa. Lit. to be wanting, (*pa*).

527. *Ohoho amã woanyã sika amã woanyã kaw.* (1404)

A stranger causes one to get money (but) he also is the cause of one getting (bad) debts.

Sika. See note on No. 591.

Kaw. See note on No. 54.

528. *Ohoho ani akese-akese, nanso einhũ mañ mu asem, na nea ode kũrow aniwa ñkete-ñkete na ohũ mu asem.* (1406)

A stranger may have big big eyes, but he does not see into what is going on among the people he is among, whereas the town's man, with little little eyes, *he* knows all the town's affairs.

Akese-akese. Note the plural form of the adjective; as also *ñkete-ñkete*.

529. *Ohoho nsoa funu ti.* (1408)

A stranger does not carry the head of the corpse.

Nsoa funu ti. For note on the custom of 'carrying the body', see No. 77. *Funu*, see note on No. 185.

530. *Ohoho soe wo fi na wannyaw wo biribi a, ogyaw wo kaw.* (1409)

When a stranger stops at your house and does not leave you anything else, he leaves you debts.

Fi. See note on No. 262, *fi*.

Wannyaw. Lit. has not left, neg. of *gyaw*.

Kaw. See note on No. 54.

531. *Ohoho te se abofra.* (1410)

A stranger is like a child.

532. *Ohoho te se sunsũansu.* (1411)

A stranger is like unto the water running over the ground after a rain storm (which soon dries up and leaves little trace behind.)

533. *Ohoho ntõ mmära.* (1412)

A stranger does not break laws.

Ntõ mmära. *Tõ mmära*, to break a law; *hye mmära*, to make laws; *di mmära so*, to keep laws. This saying shows that 'ignorance of the law' does excuse, according to native custom.

534. *Ahohoduan ye wo de a, wo anuonyam ye ketewa.* (1413)

When you accept the hospitality of a stranger, your dignity is small.

Anuonyam. *Anim-ye-nyam*, lit. in the eyes makes bright.

535. *Abũrokyiri nye kọ-nã, na po na ehĩa.* (665)

It would not be difficult to go to Europe, if it were not for the sea.

Abũrokyiri. For deriv. see note on No. 268.

Kọ-nã. See note on No. 157, *nye-nã*.

536. *Abũrokyiri a mereko eñhĩa me, mpoãno na ehĩa me.* (666)

(The thought of) Europe, where I am going, does not distress me, it is (surf on) the beach that is the difficulty.

Mpoãno. Lit. the edge (mouth) of the sea. The West Coast of Africa is of course notorious for the surf which thunders along its beach, making landing often a difficult and dangerous proceeding.

537. *Nnipa ñhĩnā pe Abũrokyiri ako, na onyǎ na wonnyǎ.* (2431)

All men would like to go to Europe, it is the opportunity they lack.

Ako. Note the construction in the subordinate noun clause, after the verb *pe*; see note on No. 2, *wope*.

Onyǎ na wonnyǎ. Lit. getting (*onyǎ*, a verbal noun), they do not get.

538. *Obũroni a ote abantenterĩ mu, se owu a, na oda fam'.* (668)

The white man who lives in the castle, when he dies he lies in the ground.

Obũroni. A European; deriv. *bũru*, dirty, filthy. This seems a decidedly unflattering etymon till one remembers that in Africa

dirt is white, clay, dust, or earth coloured, hence the white man was christened 'the dirty one'.

Qte. See note on No. 366.

Abantenten. Deriv. perhaps *obo*, stone, *odañ*, house, and *tenten*, long, high, i. e. a house built of stone. The old Coast castles are so called. 'The white man who lives in the castle', is the Governor. *Abañ*, (*obo 'dañ*) is the common word used for 'the Government', lit. 'the castle'.

539. *Obūroni toñ asekañ na ne ti afuw.* (669)

It is the white man who sells knives, yet his head is overgrown with hairs.

A native, when he wants his hair cut, uses a sharp knife or razor; the white man, as the purveyor of these, might, so the native thinks, have been expected to make more use himself of his unlimited supply.

Afuw. See note on No. 709.

540. *Brofo adaworoma na yeñ ñhĩnā furafura ntāmā.* (644)

It is thanks to the white man that we all wear cloths.

Brofo. Plu. of *Obūroni*, q. v. No. 538.

Adaworoma. The word *nti* is probably understood after *adaworoma*.

Furafura. Reduplication of *fura*. The Ashanti dress is a cloth wound round the body up to the breasts and the end thrown over the left shoulder, (if a left-handed man, the right). When coming into the presence of, or addressing, a chief or superior, the shoulder is bared as a mark of respect, the right hand placed on the hip, the right foot advanced, the sandal slipped off and the foot set on it, but not in it.

541. *Brofo de nyansa na eforo po.* (645)

By virtue of wisdom the white men mount the sea.

542. *Obrofotefo na omā obūroni ye aye.* (646)

It is the native who knows English who directs the white man whom to praise (and whom to blame).

Obrofotefo. Lit. 'one who hears English', here, the native interpreter. This saying pretty shrewdly sums up the position, in the native mind, of the official or other European who has to rely on an interpreter in his dealings with them.

543. *Obi nim se ohĩa behĩa no a, ankã oko Brofo mã 'yewo no.* (264)

If any one had knowledge previous to his birth that he was going to have to suffer from poverty, then he would have gone to the white men that he might have been born of them.

In the native mind all Europeans must be prosperous and rich.

Ankã. See note on No. 733.

'Yewo. See note on No. 641, *'yedi.*

544. *Wudi Bũroni ade a, wokõ aprem ano.* (876)

When you eat the white man's pay, you fight at the cannon's mouth.

545. *Wo nã te Abibirim' na wo agya te Abũrokyiri, na wope ade a, wonkye nyã.* (2065)

When your mother lives in Africa and your father in Europe, and when there is a thing you want, you do not have to wait for it.

Te. See note on No. 366.

Abibirim'. Africa, lit. among the blacks, the black man's country, deriv. *biri*, black.

Abũrokyiri. See note on No. 268.

CHAPTER XI

HUNGER, SICKNESS, MEDICINE, FEAR, HATRED, AND FRIENDSHIP.

546. *Okom de aberewa a, na ose, 'T'õtõ biribi mã mmofra na wonni'.* (1685)
When an old woman is hungry, then she says, 'Roast something for the children that *they* may eat'.

547. *Okom de hoho a, oda, na odidi mē a, obisabisa nkũrofo yerenom.* (1686)

When a stranger is hungry he sleeps, but when he has eaten his fill he goes about accosting the town's folks' wives.

Hoho. See note on No. 526.

Nkũrofo. For note on suffix *fo*, see No. 78, *kontromfĩ*.

548. *Okom de hoho a, ode fi ne kũrom'.* (1687)

When a stranger is hungry, he brought it (hunger) with him from his own village.

549. *Okom de akoo, na okom de hene.* (1688)

Hunger is felt by a slave and hunger is felt by a king.

550. *Okom de wo a, ede wo nkõ.* (1690)

When you feel hungry, it is only you who feel hungry (one does not feel hungry for another).

551. *Okom de wo a, womfá wo nsa abien nnidi.* (1691)

When you are hungry, you do not use both your hands for eating with.

Womfá . . nnidi. For note on double negative see No. 33, *nsisi* ; *nnidi*, neg. of *di*.

552. *Okom nè ka, na efanim ka.* (1692)

Of (the two) hunger and debt, debt is preferable.

Ka. See note on No. 54.

553. *Oyare a ebekum wo bõ wo a, wonkae duruyõfo.* (3540)

When the illness that is going to kill you comes upon you, you forget the doctor who could have cured you.

Duruyõfo. *Duru-ye-fo* ; some one who makes medicine.

554. *Oyare, wokõ no ahohora.* (3543)

Illness is driven off by insults (fear of insults) ?

Physical defects or abnormalities among the Ashantis such as lameness, having lost a finger, arm, or foot, &c., &c., preclude a man from ever becoming a chief. An infant born with six fingers used to be killed. The saying perhaps means that a patient is more willing to submit to the treatment prescribed by the doctor as he fears the slights he would be subjected to were he to be permanently disabled.

555. *Oyare nsãe a, wonnye ayaresade.* (3545)

The physician's fee is not paid till the sickness is over.

Wonnje. Neg. of *gye*, to receive, lit. they do not receive.

Ayaresade. *Sa oyare*, to cure an illness, lit. something given for curing an illness.

556. *Oyare see akyẽafo.* (3546)

Sickness destroys even he who is most worthy.

557. *Woyare anomdew a, na woyare ntoto.* (3548)

If you suffer from a complaint that is always crying out for delicacies, then you (also) have a complaint that is always calling for buying.

Anomdew. Lit. 'a sweet mouth', cf. 'sweet tooth'.

558. *Oduruyefo nnõm aduru mmã oyarefo.* (1045)

The physician does not drink the medicine for the patient.

Aduru. See note on No. 13.

Mmã. See note on Nos. 727 and 14.

559. *Wopa opayare a, oyare pa gye wo mu.* (2579)

When you make pretence of being ill, a real illness lays hold on you.

Wopa. See note on No. 254, *oboa*.

560. *Obi nyaré ayamka ñkye akyebũro mfa nsa nehõ yare.* (394)

No one who has belly-ache tries to cure himself with parched corn.

Nyare, ñkye, mfa, nsa. A good example of the idiom noted under No. 33, *nsisi*.

561. *Nnua ñhĩnã ye aduru, na wunnim a, na wuse, eye bone.* (1021)

All plants are medicinal, but you do not know and say this one is (useless) bad.

Aduru. See note on No. 13.

562. 'Mā me aduru mpremprēn,' nye aduru. (1972)

'Give me medicine at once,' you cannot expect that to be good medicine.

The meaning is that the native herbalist must be given time to go and search for the suitable plant or root.

563. *Suro nea obēn wo.* (3124)

Fear him who is near you.

564. *Suro nea ose, obegye, na nsuro nea ose, 'Meremā wo'.* (3125)

Fear him who says he will take from you, but do not fear him who says, 'I am going to give you'.

565. *Misuro kum nti na maye me kōn tiā.* (3126)

Because I fear to be killed I have made my neck short.

The common method of executing people in Ashanti was for the executioner (*obrafo*) to seize the victim, force his head forward and then slowly carve through the spinal column at the base of the neck. A small skewer-like knife (*osepo*) was generally first run through the cheeks and tongue in order to prevent the swearing of the 'great' oath or the 'king's' oath. (See note on No. 496, *wokā*.)

566. *Yensuru dōm anim, na menne asem anim.* (3127)

We do not fear the front of battle, much less the front where words are weapons.

Dōm. See note on No. 306.

Menne. Neg. of *de*.

567. *Wusuro nnimmo a, wode wo sekañ gua ɔnañkā.* (3128)

If you are afraid to incur unpopularity, you have your knife taken (borrowed) to flay a python.

Nnimmo. Deriv. *Bɔ din*.

Gua ɔnañkā. After the knife being so used it would be considered useless.

The proverb means, a weak man who panders to a cheap popularity is soon imposed on. This saying, in the eight words it contains, gives one perhaps as good an insight into the Ashanti character as might be otherwise gained in as many years, and might be taken as the motto of those whose lot it is to rule and guide the destinies of this people, or at least as giving a sound basis on which to work. No natives among whom the present writer has ever cast his lot, have sharper or keener wits, or are more ready

to take full advantage of weakness whether engendered by a real and genuine desire to win their hearts by an exaggerated consideration and mistaken kindness, or merely in the hopes of gaining a temporary and cheap popularity; for the recipient of any such mistaken leniency will be the first to laugh at and take advantage of the donor behind his back. Here, real firmness, tempered by absolute fairness and infinite patience, commands in the long run real and lasting respect long after the temporary abuse and grumbling thrown at one 'who will *not* have his knife taken from him to flay a python', has subsided. The true Ashanti is at heart 'a strong' man and at heart respects the man who deals with him as such.

Bacon's saying that no king was ever loved who was not feared, is very true among this really fine and manly nation.

568. *Wusuro odoṅko biñ a, wofīcē no mpreñsā.* (3130)

When you fear (to remove) a slave's excrement, you look on it many times.

Odoṅko. See note on No. 460, *nnoṅkofo*.

Mpreñsā. Lit. three times, see note on No. 767.

569. *Wusuro guamsem a, wo abaguade ye ketewa.* (3131)

When you fear to take part in public disputes, your share of fees (for attending such 'palavers') is small.

Guamsem = *Gua-mu-aseṁ*.

Abaguade = *Bo-agua-aḍe*.

570. *Wusuro ahenware a, wowo nnoḥowa ba.* (3132)

If you fear to marry a chief, you will give birth to a nameless child.

571. *Wotañ wo yonkō ba a, wo ba wu awusiñ.* (3179)

When you hate your friend's child, your own child dies a sudden death.

Awusiñ. *Awu-siñ*; *siñ*, a part or fragment of a thing, hence here, short, sudden.

572. *Wotañ nipa a, womā oye nneema ñhñā.* (3180)

When a man is disliked he is blamed for all kinds of things.

573. *Obi tañ wo a, na oparuw wo mparuiñwoma.* (431)

When some one hates you, he makes malignant remarks about you.

Mparuiñwoma. *Paruw*, and *ñwoma*, bitter, gall; *paruw* is, 'to express an opinion on a person or matter'.

574. *Obi tañ wo a, ɛñworañwora wo.* (432)

When some one hates you, he scratches you.

Among the Ashantis it is considered a disgrace to have any marks (tattoo) on the face or body, such being considered a mark of slave origin.

When a child is born, all of whose brothers or sisters have died, it has its face scarred over, the idea probably being that the malignant spirit which has caused the death of this child's brothers and sisters will consider it of no account. Such a child is even named *odɔ̀nko*, slave. See also No. 138.

575. *Obi tañ wo a, na ɔbo wo aboa ade.* (429)

When some one hates you, he reminds you of the promises you made (and have not fulfilled).

Aboa ade. *Bɔ ade*, (cf. proverb No. 54), a thank-offering made or promised to a *sumañ* or *ɔbosom* (see No. 17).

576. *Wo atamfo abiesã kɔ agyina, na hena na abebu wo bem ?* (3169)

When three people who hate you go aside to deliberate on the verdict to be given on you, who is going to find you innocent ?

Kɔ agyina. Lit. to go and stand (apart).

577. *Wo tamfo di wo asem ase kañ a, wokã ñkyene a, ɛdañ mako.* (3170)

When one who hates you gets the first chance to state a case he has with you (before the elders), when you talk salt it turns to pepper.

Wokã ñkyene. Lit. to talk salt, i.e. speak well and truly. Salt is greatly valued here as among all savages. A pinch of salt is to the little African what sweets are to the European child. Much of the salt used on the West Coast comes from the salt lagoons on the coast.

578. *Wo tamfo sũa wo asaw a, ɔkyeakyea ne pã.* (3173)

When one who dislikes you imitates you dancing, he bends his waist sideways.

Sũa. To learn, also to copy.

579. *Ọtañ nni aduru.* (3174)

There is no medicine to cure hatred.

Nni. Neg. of *wo*.

Aduru. See note on No. 13.

580. *Wotañ bi a, na wofa ne yere.* (3175)

When you hate some one, then you seduce his wife.

Wofa ne yere. Lit. take his wife.

581. *Wotañ wo nã a, womfá no mmã dom.* (3176)

(Even) if you hate your mother, you do not hand her over to the enemy.

Womfá . . . mmã. See note on No. 33, *mfa, nsisi.*

Dom. See note on No. 306.

582. *Wo yonkõ di wo amĩm na wunni no bi a, na ete se wusuro no.* (3673)

When your friend helps himself to the larger share (when eating with you) and you (next time you are eating with him) do not do likewise, then it is as if you fear him.

Wunni. Neg. of *di*, *amĩm* being understood.

583. *Oyonkõ mu wo oyonkõ.* (3674)

Among friends there are some who are (greater) friends (than others).

584. '*Yonkõ, yonkõ,*' *na emã asem tereu.* (3675)

'Friend, friend (I will tell you a secret),' that is how news spreads.

585. *Ade to wo ani so a, wo yonkõ na oyi mã wo.* (814)

When something gets in your eye, it is your friend who removes it for you.

Na. Here emphatic, see No. 1.

Mã. See note on No. 14.

586. *Woko wo yonkõ ñkyeñ agoru na ne nã pam no a, na ode wo.* (1583)

When you go to your friend's house to play, and his mother drives him off, it is really you she means (to send home).

Agoru. Subjunctive.

Na. See note on No. 1.

587. *Wo ani bere wo yonkõ ade a, woye bi, na wuñwĩa.* (2291)

When you covet something belonging to your friend, you work for it, but you do not steal (it).

Ani. Eye reddens, see note on No. 34, *kõn do.*

Ade. See note on No. 85, *me dea.*

Woye bi. Lit. you make, i.e. earn one by work.

CHAPTER XII

FOLLY AND WISDOM; TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD; POVERTY
AND RICHES.

588. *Okwasea na ose, ' Wode me yonkō, na wonné me'.* (1907)

It is the fool who says, ' They mean my friend, but not me '.

Okwasea. Deriv. *okwa*, in vain, foolish ; and *se*, to say.

Na. Here an emphatic particle, translated by the definite article.
See No. 1.

Wonné. Neg. of *de*.

589. *Okwasea na wobu no be a, wokyerē no ase.* (1908)

When the fool is told a proverb, the meaning of it has to be explained to him.

Wobu . . . be. See note on No. 258.

Wokyerē. Translated by passive.

590. *Okwasea, na ne guan tew mpen abien.* (1906)

It is the fool's sheep that breaks loose twice.

Guan. See note on No. 17.

591. *Okwasea redi ne sika a, ose ne nsenña ye merew.* (1904)

When a fool is squandering his gold dust, he says his scales are out of order.

Sika. See following note on *nsenña*. *Sika*, original meaning, gold, gold dust, now stands for money (gold, silver or copper).

Nsenña. Scales. Light balances are used by the Ashantis for weighing gold dust. The weights, commonly known as ' Ashanti weights ', are cast from metal by the *cire perdue* process and often show a high degree of aesthetic art. Each weight is designed to represent some object ; man, woman, animal, hunting-belt, pumpkin, &c., &c. The process of casting is as follows : A rough model of the object desired is worked in clay ; when dry this is coated all over with beeswax, and all the finishing touches added. The whole model is then covered over with clay ; a duct, or passage being left, leading to the wax. The clay is now heated, when the wax runs out leaving a space between the first and second layers.

Into this the molten metal is run. When the clay is broken away, the metal model is found. (For a full description, vide the Author's *Hausa Folk-Lore*.)

The names and equivalent values in English money of some of the Ashanti weights (for gold dust) are as follows :

Name of Weight.	Value in Gold Dust, (approx.) in English Money.	Remarks.
	£ s. d.	
<i>Powa</i> . . .	$\frac{1}{2}$	Smallest weight used.
<i>Pésewa</i> . . .	1	Lit. a small seed, perhaps originally used as weight.
<i>Damma</i> . . .	2	Also a small seed.
<i>Takujā</i> . . .	3	Lit. half a <i>taku</i> q.v.
<i>Taku</i> . . .	6	
<i>Dommajā</i> (lit. half a <i>domma</i>).	4 0	There is a tree called the <i>domma</i> tree. Probably its seed was used originally.
<i>Agyirātūfēfā</i> .	4 6	One <i>ackie</i> .
<i>Bodōmó</i> . .	10 0	<i>Bodōm</i> , a kind of bead.
<i>Sowa</i> . . .	6 9	<i>Sowa</i> , also name of plant.
<i>Agyiratīe</i> . .	9 0	2 <i>ackies</i> .
<i>Suru</i> . . .	18 0	4 <i>ackies</i> .
<i>Asia</i> . . .	1 7 0	6 <i>ackies</i> , on which standard probably based as <i>asūā</i> = 6.
<i>Osūā</i> . . .	2 0 6	<i>Asuanu</i> = 2 <i>asūā</i> = £4 1s. ; <i>asuasa</i> = 3 <i>asūā</i> , and so on.
<i>Bennā</i> . . .	7 4 0	
<i>Pereguani</i> . .	8 2 0	36 <i>ackies</i> .
<i>Tasuanu</i> . . .	12 13 0	There is a tree with long seed-pods called <i>tā</i> , plu. <i>nta</i> (not to be confused with <i>tawa</i> , the tobacco plant) ; so in <i>tasuanu</i> we would seem to have, 1 <i>ata</i> + 2 <i>asūā</i> . Two <i>nta</i> = <i>ntanu</i> , as seen below = £16 4s. One <i>atā</i> therefore = £8 2s. + 2 <i>asūā</i> (= £4 1s.) ; total, £12 3s.
<i>Ntanu</i> . . .	16 4 0	See note above on <i>tasuanu</i> .
<i>Ntasa</i> . . .	24 6 0	<i>Ntasa</i> = £24 6s. and so on.

It will be noted that many of the names of 'Ashanti weights' are also the names of plants or trees, and hence of their seeds,

which would seem to point to these having originally been used as weights, and it would be most interesting to take, say two seeds from the *tawa* tree and compare the metal weight of that name, when the value of gold dust in ancient times might be roughly gauged. There seem to be three bases of currency, the *mpésewa*, the *taku*, and the *ackie*, corresponding (approximately) to our 1*d.*, 6*d.*, 4*s.* 6*d.* The designs used for weights would seem often to be symbolical (see proverbs Nos. 136 and 174).

Merew. Soft, yielding, here of scales, easily weighed down, hence out of order.

592. *Okwasea ani te a, nã agoru agu.* (1910)

By the time the fool has learned to play the game, the players have dispersed.

Te. *Te, tew*, lit. to be clear.

593. *Okwasea nnim biribi a, onim ne fufũ tow.* (1911)

If the fool knows nothing else, he (at least) knows all about his plantain dumpling.

Fufũ. See note on No. 14.

594. *Nea wuresisi kwasea no, na onyansafo te ho fũe wo.* (2238)

Where you are taking advantage of a fool, there a wise man is, looking on at you.

Onyansafo. For note on suffix *fo*, see No. 78, *kontromfĩ*.

595. *Okwasea na wotew ne ntorowa toñ no.* (1909)

It is the fool whose own tomatoes (?) are plucked and sold to him.

Na. Translated by the definite article.

Wotew. Translated by passive.

596. *Nyansa nye sika na woakyekyere asie.* (2554)

Wisdom is not gold dust that it should be tied up and put away.

Woakyekyere asie. Lit. that they have . . . in order to.

597. *Onyansafo de pesewa gye okwasea nsam' pereguan.* (2555)

The clever man takes one penny worth of gold dust and receives from the hand of the fool gold dust of the value of £8.

Pesewa . . . pereguan. See note on 'Ashanti weights' under No. 591.

598. *Anyansafo bānu goru a, ntōtō ba.* (2558)

When two men of equal wisdom play together, discord arises.

Bānu. See note on No. 781.

599. *Anyansafo bānu kye mēnsā, obākō dan si ho, na obākō redan butuw ho.* (2559)

When two wise men are dividing up a yam between them, one turns a piece over and puts it down (for the other), but the other again turns it over and exposes the other side.

Mēnsā. A variety of yam which is very liable to attack from an insect pest which bores into the yam and spoils it; the turning of the yam mentioned in the saying is to cover up the diseased portion.

600. *Obi ñkyekyere nyansa-kotoku mfa ñkoto adakam' mmegyina adiho, nse no se, 'Kyere me asem'.* (223).

No one ties up a wisdom-bag, and takes it and puts it away in a box and comes and stands in the courtyard and says, 'Explain the matter to me'.

Nyansa-kotoku. In the original this is written with a hyphen, making the word a compound noun, lit. 'a wisdom-bag'; without the hyphen, and with *mu* added, it would mean,—'wisdom in a bag'.

Mfa, ñkoto, mmegyina, nse. Note that all these verbs are in the negative following the first verb *ñkyekyere*. See note on No. 33, *nsisi*.

601. *Nokware mu nni abra.* (2475)

In truth there is no deceit.

Nokware. Deriv. *ano* = mouth, and *kware* (?).

Nni. Neg. of *wo*.

602. *Nokware nye ahē (nnōsō) na wōatīva mu ñkontompo.* (2477)

There is not so much of truth that it should be cut off by falsehood.

Wōatīva. Lit. that they should have cut it. *Tīva ñkontompo*, lit. to 'cut a lie' (from truth?), i. e. to tell a lie.

603. *Wutīva ñkontompo a, wusuro Kumase.* (3403)

When you tell a lie, you fear Coomassie.

The king of the Ashantis used to be resident in Coomassie, hence important cases would be taken to be tried there.

Kumase. Deriv. *Kum*, to kill, and *ase*, under. Lit. 'under the kill tree', from a tree in the centre of the town under which human sacrifices and executions took place.

604. *Otörofo de mfe apem tu kwan a, onokwafo de dakoro tiw no to no.* (3338)

Whereas the liar takes a thousand years to go a journey, the one who speaks the truth follows and overtakes him in a day.

Otörofo. A liar; the root would seem to be *töro*, *törotöro*, slippery, hence metaphorically 'smooth-tongued', 'oily-tongued'.

605. '*Otörofo gye aqua*'; *ose*, '*Manyã obo*'. (3339)
'Smooth-tongued one take a seat'; he says, 'I have got a stone'.

Otörofo. See note above, 604.

Aqua. As *akonina*, stool.

606. *Otörofo na ose, 'Me dansefo wo Abürokyiri*'. (3341)
The smooth-tongued one says, 'My witness is in Europe'.

Abürokyiri. See note on No. 268.

607. *Wode ñkontompo kã asem a, wobëre.* (754)
When you speak falsehoods in stating a case, you become weary.

The antithesis of this saying is often added, i. e. *wode nokware kã asem a, awu*; when you speak the truth the matter dies, i. e. is quickly settled.

608. *Wode ñkontompo pe ade mfe apem a, onokwafo de nokware gye wo nsam' dakoro.* (755)

When you seek for a thing for one thousand years by the aid of falsehood, the truthful man, using truth, takes it from your grasp in a day.

609. *Atokoro see nokwapem.*
One falsehood spoils a thousand truths.

Atokoro = *Atoro-koro*.

Nokwapem = *Nokware-apem*.

610. *Ehã bateni hã pãni.* (1330)
When the hirer is in want, the hireling is in want.

Ehã. An impersonal verb, 'it lacks, there is need of to'. *Ehã me sika*, there is need of money to me, I lack money.

Batani. Deriv. *bata*, trade, and *ni*, the personal suffix. *Di bata* = to trade.

Pāni. Deriv. *pa* to hire, also to give one's services for payment, *ni* the personal suffix.

611. *Elhã onipa a, oḍa wuram'*. (1331)

When a man is in want, he sleeps in the forest.

That is, he is compelled to go far afield, hunting or fishing, in order to find food.

Wuram'. See note on No. 92.

612. *Elhã wo a, na woreŵe sumãñã-dŵé*. (1333)

When in want, then you eat the palm nuts off the refuse heap.

Woreŵe. Present continued action expressed by *re*, lit. you are eating.

613. *Elhã wo a, ñwu*. (1334)

When you are in want, do not die.

That is, do not give up hope.

614. '*Ahã me na fŵe mã me,*' *nti na obi yee akoo*. (1335)

'I am in want, so look after me,' it is thus some became slaves, (lit. one became a slave).

Yee. Past tense, formed by lengthening of final vowel.

Akoo. See note on No. 443.

615. *Ohã, wodi no fie, na wonni no gua so*. (1337)

When you are a poor man, you remain at home and do not mix in public affairs.

Wodi no . . . na wonni, &c. Lit. poverty, you eat it at home, but do not eat, &c. *Wonni*, neg. of *di*.

616. *Ohã hã wo a, woŵe aberekyi wěre*. (1339)

When you are in want, you chew a goat's skin.

Aberekyi wěre. In times of scarcity the skins of goats and sheep are cut up and boiled.

617. *Ohã hã wo na wuĩ abeté a, eḍaĩ' fũn*. (1340)

When you are in want and pick out the maize from the pot, that even turns into a leaf.

Abeté. Roasted maize, which only the poor eat. *Tĩ*, lit. to pinch between the finger and thumb, hence pick out with the fingers.

Fán. A leaf, hence vegetable, like spinach. Many leaves of various plants are boiled and eaten in time of great scarcity. The natives derive Fantee from this word.

618. *Ohã hã wo na woto nsu-onñwinim' a, ehye wo.* (1341)

When you are suffering from poverty and happen to fall into cold water, it scalds you.

619. *Ohã ñhye da.* (1342)

Poverty does not fix on a day (to come upon one), (i.e. its arrival will be unexpected).

620. *Ohã na emã odehye ye akoo.* (1344)

It is poverty that causes the free man to become a slave.

Na. Here emphatic. See No. 1, *na*.

Odehye. See note on No. 430.

Akoo. See note on No. 443.

621. *Ohia na emã otñea ko anopa-be soo.* (1345)

It is poverty that causes the dog (i.e. the dog's master) to have to turn out for the early morning palm-nut cutting.

Otñea. A bitch, also used generally for both male and female, = *okraman* = dog.

Anopa-be. *Anopa-be*, lit. morning palm nut. There are two recognized times for the cutting of palm nuts, very early in the morning, called *anopa-be* and again late in the afternoon, called *anume-be* (*anumere-be*). Hence these two expressions are often used to mean generally the hours of about 5-6 A.M. and 4-5 P.M.

622. *Ohã ne gyimi.* (1346)

Poverty is stupidity.

That is, a poor man is reckoned a fool. Cf. No. 627 below.

623. *Ohã nni Abũrokyiri a, ankã Obũroni amnehata ne ntama Abibirim'.* (1347)

If there had been no poverty in Europe, then the white man would not have come and spread his cloths in Africa.

Abũrokyiri. See note on No. 268.

Ankã. See note on No. 733.

Obũroni. See note on No. 538.

Amnehata. Note the auxiliary, *bẽra*.

Abibirim'. See note on No. 545.

624. *Ohĩa te se 'wo, enno fākō.* (1348)

Poverty is like honey, it is not peculiar to one place alone.

'Wo = *Ewo*.

Enno. Neg. of *dō*.

625. *Ohĩa nti na aseredowa sisi abũrobia so.* (1351)

It is want that causes the little 'aseredowa' bird to alight on the 'bũrobia' plant.

Nti = *Eno ti*.

626. *Ohĩa tumi nye tumi-pa.* (1353)

The display of power exhibited by poverty is not real power.

A poor man having nothing to lose and becoming desperate, sometimes commits acts which some one having anything at stake would hesitate to do.

627. *Ohĩa ye adámno.* (1354)

Poverty is madness.

Cf. No. 622 above.

Adámno. Derive. *bō dam*.

628. *Ohĩa-da na wohũ nipa.* (1357)

On the day of poverty it is then you perceive who is a man.
(a friend)

Na. Emphatic particle, see No. 1.

629. *Ohĩani abũwa koro ñkye bèrē, nso wañko a, yennidĩ.* (1359)

The poor man's only slave girl soon gets wear, but if she does not go (and work) we do not eat.

Ñkye bèrē. Lit. does not delay tiring. 'Soon' is thus expressed in the Ashanti idiom.

630. *Ohĩani bo mfuw.* (1360)

The poor man does not get in a rage.

Bo mfuw. See note on *kōn dō*, No. 34.

631. *Ohĩani bu bē a, eñhye.* (1361)

When a poor man makes a proverb, it does not spread abroad.

Bu bē. See note on No. 258.

632. *Ohĩani di powade a, eyē se odi dīwane.* (1362)

When a poor man eats something of the value of a halfpenny, it is as if he partakes of a sheep.

Powade. *Powa ade*, see note on No. 591, *nsenña*.

Dĩvane = *Oguani*.

633. *Ohĩani fura kyẽmẽ a, eyẽ se efura dunsĩn.* (1365)

When a poor man wears a silken robe, it is as if it decked a tree stump.

Dunsĩn = *Dua sin*. For derivation according to natives, see No. 57, *odum*.

634. *Ohĩani hye sika a, wobu no aĩcowa.* (1366)

When a poor man is decked out in gold, people say it is brass.

Sika. See note on No. 591, *sika*, here 'golden ornaments'.

635. *Ohĩani nè ɔdefo ñĩoru.* (1367)

The poor man and the rich man do not play together.

ɔdefo. Plu. *adefo*, lit. the possessor of things. For note on suffix *fo*, see No. 78, *kontromfĩ*.

Ñĩoru. Neg. of *goro*.

636. *Ohĩani nni biribi a, ɔwɔ tẽkrema a ɔde tutu ka.* (1368)

If the poor man has nothing else, he at least has a tongue with which to defer the payment of his debts.

ɔde. This verb (*de*) is used to express the English 'by means of', with.

Tutu ka. See note on No. 54.

637. *Ohĩani nni yɔĩkõ.* (1369)

The poor man has no friend.

638. *Ohĩani nom tawa-pa a, eyẽ se tãseĩfĩ.* (1370)

When a poor man smokes good tobacco, it is as if he were smoking the remains of some old tobacco in a pipe.

Tãseĩfĩ = *Tawa-oseĩ-fĩ*.

639. *Ohĩani pam akorogow a, na eyẽ no se odidi sãnyãĩm'.* (1372)

When the poor man mends his broken wooden bowl, it serves him just as well as if he ate off a pewter dish.

Akorogow. *Gow*, old, useless, cf. *ntamagow*, an old cloth. Suffix *fĩ* expresses the same idea.

640. *Ohĩani mpaw dabere.* (1373)

A poor man does not chose his sleeping-place.

Dabere. Suffix *bere* = place where.

641. *Ohĩani asem'*, '*yedĩ no ntiantiam*'. (1374)

The complaint a poor man brings is investigated briefly.

'*Yedi*. 'Ye is probably the Akem dialect, 3rd person plural, Ashanti *wɔ*, *wo*. Here translated by passive.

642. *Ohĩani asommė̃n ne batafɔ̃sɛ̃*. (1375)

The poor man's elephant tusk is the wart-hog's tooth.

Asommė̃n. See note on No. 94, *sɛ̃*.

643. *Ohĩani yane gorow a, 'yese oyane nĩñṽahama*. (1378)

When the poor man wears a necklace of the soft silky '*gorow*' leaves, it is said he is wearing a sheep's halter.

Gorow. A plant with particularly soft silk-like leaves, also called *afuse*. *Gɔ̃rɔ̃wɔ̃* also means weak, perhaps from same root.

'*Yese*. See note above, No. 641, '*yedi*.

Nĩñṽahama = *Oguañ hama*.

644. *Obi mfa ohĩa ntow adotebe*. (146)

Not even poverty will make a man fell a palm-tree that stands in a swamp.

Adotebe = *Dote-abe*. *Abe*, the palm wine (*palma vinifera*) tree. On felling, that the wine may be drawn off, the tree is not cut down as a rule, but the roots dug under. When so felled the wine lasts much longer without drying up than when the tree is cut down in the ordinary manner.

645. *Obi mfa ohĩa nsi apempem*. (147)

No one can extort from another by using his poverty as a threat.

Mfa . . . nsi. Note the two negatives, see note on No. 33, *nsisi*.

646. *Obi bɔ wo dua se, 'Mã oñwu !' a, enyɛ yaw sɛ ose, 'Mã ohĩa nkã no !'*
(116)

If any one invokes a fetish against you, saying, 'Let this man die', he is not harming you as much as he would were he to say 'Let poverty lay hold on him'.

Bo dua. To knock a piece of wood into the ground and at the same time to invoke a curse and call on the fetish to harm the person against whom evil is intended.

Oñwu, nkã. Imperative.

647. *Wunni ntrama a, na wuse, nsã nye dɛ*. (919)

When you have not a cowry shell, then you say that wine is not sweet.

Wunni. Neg. of *wɔ*.

Ntrama. Cowries, still to be seen in the markets of the interior. At Ejura in 1913, 160 cowries went to 1*d.* ; 40 cowries = 1 *ɔbaɲ* ; 50 *mmaɲ* (plu. of *ɔbaɲ*) = 1 *otiri*, (head). The small 'subsidiary' coinage introduced in 1912 to the Gold Coast Colony, and previously to that into Nigeria (tenths and halfpennies) will soon banish the cowry altogether from these regions.

648. *Osikani ne panyin.* (2960)

The rich man is the elder (i.e. man of importance whose words carry weight in council).

Ne. See note on No. 1.

Panyin. See note on No. 1.

649. *Wonni sika a, ankã wɔfrɛ no ñhwɛa kwa.* (917)

If one could not make use of gold dust, then it would merely be called sand.

Wonni. Neg. of *di*.

Sika. See note on No. 591.

Ankã. See note on No. 733.

650. *Sika nni adagyew a, wɔmfa mpe bosea.* (2935)

When one has just sufficient money for one's own needs, one does not let it out at interest.

Nni. Neg. of *wɔ*.

Adagyew. Lit. when money has no 'opportunity'.

Wɔmfa mpe. For double negative see note on No. 33, *nsisi*. *Pe bosea*, also *bɔ bosea*, to lend, or to borrow.

651. *Sika nni, 'Kã wo nsa pɛ'.* (2936)

With gold dust (money) it is not (a case of), 'Put forth your hand and find'.

652. *Sika ñko adidi nsaɲ mma kwa.* (2938)

Money does not go out to earn its livelihood and come back empty-handed (i.e. it earns interest).

Ñko, nsaɲ, mma. For the negatives see note on No. 33, *nsisi*.

653. *Sika kyeɲ ñkrante nnam.* (2939)

Money is sharper than a sword.

Kyeɲ. Note the comparative degree formed by using the verb *sɛɲ* or *kyeɲ*, to surpass.

654. *Sika pereguān da kūrom' a, ewo amansañ.* (2942)

If there is a *pereguān* worth of gold dust in a town, it is for the whole people.

Pereguān. See note on No. 591, *nsenña*.

This saying points to a system of communism having existed even with regard to what would now be considered as more or less private property. There are many survivals of a communistic state still in evidence; it is seen in their system of land tenure, and in that the private debts of one person are recoverable from the entire family of that person. This last is a relic of collective responsibility of the whole clan for the acts of a single member.

655. *Wo sika resā a, na wo anī tew.* (2944)

When your gold dust is becoming finished, then you become prudent.

Anī tew. Lit. your eyes become open, wide.

656. *Sika señe, biribi anseñ bio.* (2945)

Wealth (is) beyond everything, nothing is beyond that again.

657. *Sika te se akōa, woanñhũ no so fĩcē a, oguān.* (2946)

Gold dust (money) is like unto a slave, if you do not look after it well, it runs away.

Woanñhũ. Lit. have not. Aorist tense.

658. *Sika ye fe na opeggyafo ye nã.* (2950)

Wealth is a fine thing, but to find an heir is not easy.

Opeggyafo. Lit. *pe-(nea)-gyaw-fo*, some one to leave to.

Nã. See note on No. 157, *nye-nã*.

659. *Wo sika ye wo yaw a, okom de wo.* (2951)

If (spending) your money gives you pain, you will go hungry.

660. *Wo sika ye wo yaw na wokō a, wunyi dom.* (2952).

If (spending) your money gives you pain and you go to war, you will not win.

Dom. See note on No. 306.

661. *Sika-diñuma biara nye aniwu.* (2953)

It is no shame at all to work for money.

Aniwu. See note on No. 753.

662. *Osikafo nom nsã bow a, wofre no yare.* (2954)

When a sick man is drunk, he is merely said to be unwell.

663. *Osikafo wɔ hɔ yi, ofura ntamagow.* (2955)

When a man is wealthy, he may wear an old cloth.

Ntamagow. See note on No. 639.

664. *Osikani de, wɔɛwãnsĩ 'no bone ara da.* (2957)

As for a rich man, he is never sneezed at unluckily.

Wɔɛwãnsĩ. *Nwãnsĩ*, a good example of onomatopoeia. In Ashanti when a subject sneezes before a chief his nose is immediately rubbed with white clay, and during that particular day the sneezer will be held accountable for any bad *or good* luck the chief may have, and punished or rewarded accordingly.

665. *Sika beɛ wo a, ehoa.* (2931)

When gold is close to you, it is pale (no longer glitters).

666. *Wunyã ade a, wɔtaɛ wo ; wunnyã ade a, wofre wo bone.* (2516)

When you are rich, you are hated ; when you are poor, you are called a bad man.

CHAPTER XIII

FIRE, WATER, RIVERS, RAIN.

667. *Ogya a ebedew nè ne ŵisie ñkõ.* (1245)

The fire which is going to blaze up has a different smoke (from other fires).

Ogya. Fire, also firewood, fuel.

Nè ne. The first *nè* is the conjunction, 'and, with' (from the verb *de*), the second *ne* is of course the possessive pronoun. Lit. 'the fire and its smoke', &c.

Wisie = *Owisiv*.

668. *Ogya a eye nnam ñkyé afuw so.* (1246)

The firewood which is good for fuel does not remain long in the plantation. (It is soon carried home for fuel.)

Nnam. Has various meanings; 'sharp, brave', and here 'quick', i.e. to catch alight.

Afuw. See No. 709.

669. *Ogya dedaw ano nye so-ñã.* (1247)

Wood already touched by fire (and rendered dry) is not hard to set alight.

Dedaw. *Da, dada*, reduplication.

So- ñã. See note on No. 157, *nye-ñã*.

670. *Ogya hye wo a, woperew to wo ba so ansã-na woayi afi no so.* (1249)

When a spark from the fire burns you, you shake it off on to your child before you (finally) take it off him (again).

Woperew. To jerk off, to shake off; not to be confused with *pirew*, to roll. See No. 672, below.

Afi. Translate by 'from, off'; really a verb, *fi*, to come out. Cf. use of the verbs, *wɔ* and *mã*, as prepositions.

671. *Ogya hye wo a, enyé wo de, na woretáfo.* (1250)

When fire burns you, you do not find it sweet, but you keep licking the place nevertheless.

Woretáfo. *Re*, present continued action; *tafo* = *taforo*.

672. *Ogya pīrew a, eh̄ye nea oda ano.* (1251)

When a firebrand rolls out from the fire, it burns the one sleeping nearest to it.

Pīrew. In the 'Tshi Proverbs' this is written *perew* (see note above, No. 670, on *woperew*). The present writer has always heard the saying as here given.

673. *Ogya nè atudũru nna.* (1252).

Fire and gunpowder do not sleep together.

Atuduru = *Otuo-aduru*, lit. gun medicine.

674. *Yenim se wode gya beko akogu sumãna so, nanso wode fi wuram' ba a, wode ba ofie ansã.* (2350)

We know that ash is taken and thrown out on the ash heap, yet when it was brought from the bush (as firewood), it was first of all taken to the house.

Fi wuram'. *Fi*, translated by 'from' (but in Ashanti a verb, see above, No. 670, *afi*). *Wuram'*, see note on No. 92.

675. *Asu a yenni mu adũene no, yemfã mu pow.* (3067)

From the river whose fish we do not eat, we do not (even) take a nugget. (Cf. No. 676, below.)

Asu. See note on No. 26, *nsu*.

Yenni. Neg. of *di*.

Pow. A lump, here of alluvial gold. This proverb shows how strong a taboo can be considered. See note on *Tunno*, No. 55.

676. *Asu a wonnuare no, wonnom.* (3068)

A river (lit. water) you would not bathe in is not drunk from. Cf. No. 675, above.

Wonnuare. Neg. of *guare*; see No. 353, *hohoro*.

677. *Asu et etã ho diĩn na efa onipa.* (3069)

It is the water which stands there calm and silent that drowns (lit. takes) a man.

Na efa. *Na*, emphatic particle; *efa*, used euphemistically, lest perhaps the spirit in the river might be offended and be avenged on the speaker.

378. *Asu a ɛte sɛ bosõrõpo na ñkyene atɔ̃am' yi, na ɛwo ase.* (3070)

A body of water like the great sea, which is so very salt, there must be a reason for that.

Ase. Lit. bottom, foundation.

379. *Asu biara bɔ po mu a, na ne diñ ayera.* (3071)

Whatever the river that falls into the sea, its name is lost.

Ayera. Aorist tense.

380. *Asu bɔ biribi diñ na ɛwɔw.* (3072)

Water adjures the name of some thing (utters a spell) and then dries up. (Water does not dry up without a cause.)

Bɔ biribi diñ. Lit. to speak the name of some thing, i. e. (1) gives or has some reason for a certain action, or (2) adjures some one or some thing to give it power to perform a certain action.

381. *Asu fa wo a, ɛhõ ñhama ñhñā tañ wo.* (3073)

When a river is taking you (i. e. drowning you), then all the creepers on its bank (you clutch at) hate you (and will not let you get a hold).

Fa. See note above on No. 677, *na ɛfa*.

ɛhõ ñhama. Lit. the 'about it creepers', i. e. on the banks.

Note how nature is given human attributes, cf. proverb No. 680.

382. *Asu nyiri ñwam.* (3079)

A river does not flood out the toucans (which roost on the tops of high trees).

383. *Nsu a wode redum gya, wɔmpɛ no kronkron.* (3080)

Clear water is not sought for to quench a fire.

Nsu. See note on No. 26.

Wɔmpɛ. Translated by passive.

384. *Nsu fa wo a, wonom bi.* (3086)

When water is drowning you, you nevertheless drink some of it.

Fa. See note on No. 677, *na ɛfa*.

385. *Nsu-hunu yɛ ɔmẽ a, añkã akã mfa darewa.* (3087)

If plain water was satisfying enough, then the fish would not take the hook.

Añkã. Vide note on No. 733.

Akã. A kind of fish.

Darewa. *Dade*, iron, and the diminutive suffix *wa*, lit. 'the little piece of iron'.

686. *Nsu kye toam' a, eboñ.* (3089)

When water remains long in a calabash, it stinks.

Eboñ. *Boñ*, of a disagreeable smell only; *hũãm*, of a pleasant smell.

687. *Nsu potopoto! tiatia mu na kosaw nsu-pá!* (3090)

Muddy water! pass through it and go and draw the pure.

Potopoto. An onomatopoetic word, of walking and sinking in mud.

688. *Nsu asũ asum' ntĩ na osánsá refa apatã.* (3091)

Because the water has dried up in the river the fish eagle is catching the fish.

Nsu, . . . asum'. Note the difference in meaning. See note on No. 26, *nsu*.

689. *Nsu ansõ agware a, esõ nom.* (3093)

Water which is not sufficient for bathing in, is sufficient for drinking.

Agware. See note on No. 353, *hohoro*.

690. *Nsu-nsu ihĩnã dōsō, na bōsonopo ne panyĩn.* (3094)

Of all the many waters the sea is the old man among them.

Ne. See note on No. 1.

Panyĩn. See note on No 1.

691. *Nsu yiri a, na apatã aye ahantain.* (3097)

When the water is in flood, the fish is proud.

692. *Osu a eto Krobow no, ebi atq Siade.* (3051)

Of the rain that falls on the Crobo hills some has fallen on the Shai mountains.

Osu. See note on No. 26, *nsu*.

Krobow. The 'Crobo' hills to the west of the Volta; 'Siade', part of the same range (?).

693. *Osu boro bo a, etim' nea etim'.* (3053)

Though rain beats on a stone it (the stone) stands firm where it stands.

Etim = Ti mu.

694. *Osu ǎe fwo a, wuse, 'Wafǎe me', na wunse se, 'Opetěě me so'.* (3055)

When the rain beats you, you say, 'It has beaten me', but you do not say, 'It drizzled on me'.

Se. See note on No. 66.

Perhaps the idea in this proverb is that seen in Nos. 681 and 677, where a euphemistic expression is used so as to avoid giving offence. In the case of the rain, it not having any particular '*mana*' 'we can afford to speak our mind', they would say.

Opetěě. Past tense; *wafǎe* is Aorist.

695. *Oso to a, wokum komfo; osu anto a, wokum komfo.* (3056)

When the rain falls, the fetish priest is killed; (and) when the rain does not fall, the fetish priest is killed.

Komfo. See note on No. 22, *okomfo*.

696. *Oso beto a, mframa na edi kañ.* (3057)

When the rain is going to fall, it is the wind that comes first.

Na. Emphatic particle, trans. by 'it is the . . .' See No. 1.

697. *Oso atō aboro asense, 'Monnsereu me, me hō bewo'.* (3059)

The rain has fallen (and) beat on the '*asense*' fowl (and she says), 'You need not laugh at me, I shall get dry'.

Atō aboro. Note the two finite verbs unconnected by any prepositions.

Asense. A kind of native hen, the feathers on which look very scanty and as if constantly ruffled.

698. *Osu to fǎe wo na oǎia fi hye wo a, na wuhũ abrabō yaw.* (3060)

When the rain falls and beats upon you and the sun comes forth and scorches you, then you behold (as it were) the troubles of life.

Oǎia. See note on No. 1, *asase*.

Abrabō. Deriv. *bō* and *běra* (?) a state of being or coming (into the world), hence events that befall one in life.

699. *Osu to gu po mu.* (3061)

The rain falls, pouring into the sea.

(The saying is often continued by an explanatory sentence which runs, *yeñim se epo sō, nanso nsu to gum.* We know the sea is large, but the rain falls into it notwithstanding.)

700. *Oso t̄o na egu biribi so ansã-na ekã wo a, enȳé yaw.* (3063)

When the rain falls and drops on something else first before touching you, it does not hurt.

701. *Osu t̄o anadīvo na woanhũ a, adekyẽẽ, woanhũ fam ana ?* (3065)

When the rain falls at night and you have not known of it, at dawn have you not seen the ground ?

Adekyẽẽ. See note on 203, *ade ansã*.

CHAPTER XIV

GENERAL PRECEPTS AND MAXIMS.

702. *Obi abesebürow mmá (nyé yiye) a, womfá won anan ase akumsúmán ñkofa mù (ase).* (115)

When some one's October maize crop does not promise well, no one is fool enough to go and walk through that plantation with a bad charm fastened to his legs (and thus get the blame of causing the crop to fail, which was obviously going to happen in any case).

Abesebürow. Derivation, *bese* (to pluck?) and *abürów*, Indian corn. Hence, crops planted from October onwards, which are naturally very uncertain, as the rains proper are then over, such crops being dependent on chance showers. Such a second crop is also sometimes known as *adom-mürow*, lit. 'corn got by grace'.

Womfá . . . ñkofa. For the double negative see note on *mfa, nsisi*, No. 33.

Akumsúmán. Lit. a charm to kill, i.e. counteract another charm, good or bad according as the charm which it is to neutralize is bad or good. In this case the owner of the farm would have a good charm to promote the growth of his crops, hence the counteracting charm would be a bad one. For note on *súmán* see No. 17, *gbosom*.

Ñkofa mù. Lit. to go and take (the way) in, i.e. walk there.

703. *Obi bọ wo aṣerekyekyé súmán ná ode ñkòmmó dùé wò anó à, na wannýǎ papa bi anye wo.* (117)

When some one fastens a charm of comfort (on your wrist) but finishes up by securing it with a knot of mourning, he has not really benefited you at all.

Aṣerekyekyé. Lit. 'to bind up, tighten the skin', i.e. to solace, to comfort. See note on *kọn dọ*, No. 34.

Súmán. See note on *gbosom*, No. 17.

Ñkòmmó. From *bọ*.

Wannýǎ . . . anye. For double negative, see note on *mfa, nsisi*, No. 33.

704. *Obi abusudé ye obi akāradé.* (118)

What is bad luck for one man is good luck for another.

Abusudé. Deriv. *mmusu ade*.

Akāradé. Lit. something for the soul. Deriv. *okra ade*. See note on *ñkrabea*, No. 9.

705. *Obi busuyefoo ne bi nipa-pa.* (119)

A knave for one is a good man for another.

Busuyefoo. Deriv. *mmusu-ye-fo*. For suffix *fo*, see note on No. 78, *kontromfi*.

706. *Obi ade-dedaw ko obi nsam' a, eye no foforo.* (121)

When an old thing belonging to one person gets into the hands of another, it becomes a new thing for him.

Ade-dedaw. *Dedaw*, reduplication of *da*, = *dada*.

707. *Obi afom akum a, wo nso nfom ññua!* (126)

When some one has killed something by mistake, as for you, do not flay it by mistake!

Afom akum. Note these two finite verbs, both Aorist tense, used without the conjunction (and), which is necessary in English. The Ashanti idiom runs, '... some one has made a mistake, some one has killed'. The same idiom is seen in *nfom ññua*. It is this form of speech, short principal clauses unconnected by any preposition, which accounts for the confusing double negative, see note on *nsisi*, No. 33.

Ññua. Neg. of *gua*.

708. *Obi fre wo Sewósé a, mpe ntem nscrew; cbia wo agya ye obonnātófó.* (127)

If some one remarks you are like your father, do not be in too great a hurry to laugh (i.e. be flattered); for all you know, your father may have been a ravisher of women.

Sewósé. Lit. *se-wo-ose* = like-your-father.

Mpe, nscrew. Note the negatives, see note on *nsisi*, No. 33.

Obonnātófó. For the suffix *fo*, see *kontromfi*, No. 78.

709. *Obi afuw sō a, womfá mpampā na efow.* (128)

Though some one may have a very large plantation, that is not to say people are to bring their bowls and loot.

Afuw. A farm; deriv. *fuw*, to shoot up from the ground.

Mpampā. Sing., *apampā*, a flat, wooden dish used for carrying plantains, yams, &c., from the farms to the house.

Efow. Note the use of the 3rd pers. neuter pronoun for the 3rd pers. plural.

710. *Obi gyina obi'mati, na ohũ-guam'.* (130)

When one stands on another's shoulders, then he sees over the market.

'*Mati.* Deriv. *ba*, *basa*, and *ti*.

711. *Obi kwan ñkye na esi bi de mu.* (134)

One man's road does not go far without meeting another's.

Ñkye. Lit. is not long.

712. *Obi kye wo ade a, (na) woda n'ase.* (135)

When some one gives you a present, (then) you thank him.

Ade. See note on No. 85, *me dea*.

Woda n'ase. Lit. you lie at 'his down', i.e. feet. This is the Ashanti idiom for 'to give thanks', and well expresses the real root idea of 'thank you', which is now hardly recognized perhaps by us; i.e. I am *under* an obligation to you, I lie down before you; said and understood in its literal sense in the days when the world was young and politeness for politeness' sake unknown.

713. *Obi mfa obi ade ñhoahoa nehõ.* (137)

No one boasts of what belongs to another.

Obi. Some one, and with neg., lit. some one not, i.e. nobody.

Mfa . . . ñhoahoa. Note the two negatives, see *mfa*, *nsisi*, No. 33. *Hoahoa* is to praise, and with the reflexive pronoun (*nehõ*), to praise oneself, i.e. boast about.

714. *Obi mfa obomũ ñhow gya so.* (138)

No one takes a whole animal and dries it over a fire.

Mfa, ñhow. Note the double negative. See *nsisi*, No. 33.

Obomũ. *Aboa-mũ* (*mũ* = whole), i.e. an animal that has just been killed but not yet flayed and cut for drying and roasting on a rack over the fire.

715. *Obi mfa ade ñkoyi mmusu wo kũrotia, na onsañ ñkofa bio.* (140)

No one places his propitiatory offering at the entrance of the village, and turns back again to remove it.

Ade ñkoyi mmusu. Lit. something (i. e. eggs, &c.) to take away harm; perhaps here an offering for an *obayifo*, q. v. No. 56.

Wo. Really a verb. Here rendered by the preposition 'at'. See note on No. 240.

Onsai ñkofa. All negatives after the first verb *mfa*. Note the auxiliary verb *kɔ* in *ñkofa*.

716. *Obi mfa adidi mfa adepe.* (141)

One cannot both feast and become rich.

Adidi. A noun. From reduplication of verb *di*, to eat, much eating, i. e. feasting.

Adepe. Lit. a thing sought after, wealth.

717. *Obi mfa dokonsiñ kwáñkyeñ mmisa nea otɔaa so.* (142)

One does not take half a loaf from the wayside and then inquire who cut the other half.

Mfa . . . mmisa. See note on *nsisi*, No. 33. *Mmisa*, neg. of *bisa*.

Dokonsiñ. *Odokono-siñ*, *odokono*, cakes made of maize, *siñ*, a piece, a part of anything.

The writer has heard this proverb quoted à propos of a case where a man complained that some one had seduced a prostitute he was living with.

718. *Obi mfa fere ñware obi ne nua a ne pām pow.* (145)

No one, lest he should be called shy, would marry some one's sister who had a lump at the base of her spine.

Mfa, ñware. For double negative, see note on *nsisi*, No. 33.

Fere. See note on No. 155, *mfere*.

Obi ne nua. Lit. some one, his sister.

Pām. *Pā*, the base of the spinal column.

719. *Obi mfa ahina hunu mu ñkyere opanyiñ.* (148)

One does not show the inside of an empty pot to an elder. (Cf. No. 382.)

Opanyiñ. See note on No. 1.

720. *Obi mfa ñhōma nto nsu mu ñko ahemfi.* (149)

One does not put a hide in water and then go off to the king's palace (where one has been summoned).

Ahemfi = *Ohene-fi*.

This proverb is spoken by a tanner, who, summoned to the chief's house, does not know how long he will be detained.

721. *Obi mfa hyirew ntiv nea watɔ wuram'*. (150)

No one takes white clay and follows some one who has run off to the forest (in order to rub it on him).

Hyirew. White clay, used to rub on the body and face (in various designs) on certain ceremonial occasions, and also when a person accused of a crime has been acquitted. This is the sense in which it is used here. The man 'who has run to the forest' has been found 'guilty', and escaped to avoid punishment.

It is a quaint belief among these people that the Milky Way is white with the myriads of clay-decked bodies of the dead.

722. *Obi mfa amanne a wahũ ntutu kaw*. (155)

No one tells how bad a state his affairs are really in, when asking for time to settle a debt.

Amanne a wahũ. Lit. the trouble he has seen. *Amanne*, not to be confused with *amannee*? what news? *Amanne*=*oman-ade*.

Kaw. See note on No. 54.

723. *Obi mfa n'afuru mmutuw büropatá so na ne mfefo ntũtũtũ mfa n'ase*. (156)

No one uses his own belly to cover up his corn store, that his friends may pull some out from under him.

Heard in the sense of, 'a chief is not going to allow his prestige to be used by others in order to extort and rob'.

Mmutuw. Neg. of *butuw*.

Büropatá. *Abürów*, corn (maize), and *páta*, a rack to store crops on.

724. *Obi mfa ne nai abieñ nsusu asu*. (158)

No one tests the depth of a river with both his feet.

Asu. See note on No. 26, *nsu*.

725. *Obi mfa ne nsa beñkum ñkyere n'agya amamfõ so*. (159)

No one takes his left hand to point out his father's old village.

Nsa beñkum. Among the Ashantis it is considered particularly insulting to put out the left hand to take anything from another. It is also insulting to point out a thing with the left hand. The left hand, never the right (as is the case among the Hausas), is used to

hold the stick they generally use to wipe the anus with. The left hand is also used to blow the nose.

Amamfo. The suffix *fõ* (nasal) is not to be confused with personal suffix *fo*, plur. of *ni*.

726. *Obi mfa ne nsa nto bi anom' na ompae n'atifĩ.* (160)

No one puts his finger in another man's mouth and then beats him over the head.

Nsa. Hand or finger, the latter is also *nsatẽã*. See note on No. 355, *nsa*, for names of the fingers.

727. *Obi mfa ne sã mmobõ adiẽe mmã ne yonkõ.* (161)

No one cracks a palm nut with his own teeth and gives it to his companion.

Mmobõ. Neg. of *bobõ*, reduplication of *bõ*.

Mmã. Instead of translating this by a verb, which it really is (as is seen by its agreement with the other negative verbs), it might be rendered by 'for'. See No. 14, *mã*.

728. *Obi mfa toamũm mfa ñkosẽre ñño.* (168)

No one takes a calabash without an opening in it to go and ask for palm oil.

Toamũm. *Toa*, a gourd out of which calabashes are made; *mũm*, having no opening, the same word as *mũm*, deaf or dumb. Cf. curiously enough, our own word 'mum', and also the Latin and Greek *mu*, representing the least sound it is possible to make with the lips.

729. *Obi mfi agyama so nma fam' mmepe okõtökõro.* (172)

No one descends from the 'gyama' shrub to the ground and then says he wants a forked stick.

Agyama. A tree with many of its branches forked.

730. *Obi ñjwẽfĩwẽẽ odabere na ade ñkyẽe da.* (182)

No one ever kept looking for a sleeping-place (and continued the search) till dawn.

Ñfũwẽfĩwẽẽ . . . ñkyẽe. Past tenses.

731. *Obi ñhintaw nso gya.* (185)

No one hides himself and (then) lights a fire.

732. *Obi ñhinti prekõ mmõ ahina.* (186)

No one breaks the water-pot the first time he stumbles.

Nhinti. *Hintiw*, cf. Hausa *funtwa*.

Mmo. From *bɔ*.

733. *Obi nhũ 'Añkǎnǎ', ñkita 'N'añkǎnǎ', nnyā 'N'añkǎnǎ', na onse se, 'Mihũi a, añkǎnǎ'.* (189)

No one who has seen 'Had I known, I should not . . .', who has laid hold of 'Had I known, I should not . . .', who has (ever) possessed 'Had I known, I should not . . .', would ever say (again) 'Had I known, I should not . . .'

Rather a quaint and pretty proverb this. 'Had I known . . .', that is, remorse, regret, 'of all sad words, it might have been', is here personified in the native mind.

Añkǎnǎ. *Añkǎ*, used in the protasis and apodosis of a conditional sentence.

734. *Obi nhũ nimdee ñko ayi (ase) na okosgre a, waserew.* (191)

No one has any sense (who) goes to attend a funeral custom, and on rising up to take his departure, laughs.

Nimdee. Knowledge, here, sense of the fitness of things. Deriv. *nim*, to know; and *ade*, a thing.

Waserew. Lit. has laughed.

735. *Obi nhũ onipa dakoro nse no se, 'Woafon'.* (192)

One does not see a man for one day only (or for the first time), and say to him, 'You have become thin'.

Se. Note, *se* is here of the nature of a true preposition, as seen by the absence of the negative.

Woafon. Aorist tense.

736. *Obi nhũ onipa aũia na analũo onsɔ kanea ñfũe n'anim.* (193)

No one sees a man by day and at night lights a lamp to look at his face.

Aũia. See note on No. 1, *asase*.

Kanea. Portuguese (?).

Ñfũe. Note the distinction between *hũ*, to perceive, see, and *fũe*, to look at. See No. 390, *hũ*.

N'anim. See note on No. 80, *aniwa*.

737. *Obi ñko obi akurā ñkyere n'ase.* (204)

One man does not go to the village of another and tell (the chief of that village) its origin (history).

Akurā. A diminutive, for *okũrow-wa*.

738. *Obi ñkô obi kũrom' ñkofre nehõ se, 'Agyeman'.* (205)
 One does not go to another's village and call himself 'Agyeman'.
Agyeman. Deriv. *Agya, òman*, lit. father of a nation.
739. *Obi ñkô ahũā ná ònkã ñkwãñ.* (207)
 No one (who) goes begging a meal is the one to serve out the soup.
Ahũā. A verbal noun, lit. a scraping; *hũā*, to scrape the burned portion off a yam or plantain; hence perhaps from this part being given to a beggar, by metonymy, 'to beg for food'.
Ònkã. *Kã*, to touch, handle, perhaps to stir, 'dish out'.
740. *Obi ańkô ná obi amma a, ańkã yebeye deñ ahũ se okwañ mu nye?* (208)
 If no one had gone and no one had come, what should we have done to find out if the road were safe (or not)?
Ańkã. See note on No. 733.
Ahũ. Subj. mood.
741. *Obi ñkose se, 'Putu ñhyew! Putu hyew a, yehũā bi adi'.* (213)
 No one says (when the yam store is on fire), 'Let the yam store burn! When it does we shall scrape roasted yams to eat.'
Yehũā. See note above, No. 739, *ahũā*.
Adi. Subjunctive.
742. *Obi ñkotew bisekyim mfa mfra bisetõro ñkotoñ mmã ne mǎnni.* (214)
 No one picks good kola nuts and mixes them with spurious ones and goes and sells them to his own countrymen.
Nkotew, mfa mfra, ñkotoñ mmã. A good example of the idiom explained under note on *mfa, nsisi*, No. 33, q. v. See also note on *mmã*, No. 727.
Bisekyim. *Bise*, the kola nut and tree (*Cola acuminata*), Hausa *goro*. The greater part of the kola consumed in the two Nigerias (N. and S.) is grown in the dense Ashanti forest. *Kyim* = *pa*.
Bisetõro. Lit. false kola nut; *toro* same root as in *atoro*, a lie.
743. *Obi ñkwati kokũrobeti mmô pow.* (221)
 No one dispenses with the thumb in tying a knot.
Kokũrobeti. The thumb, deriv. *kokuro*, big. For names of the fingers see note on No. 355, *nsa*.
Mmô. Neg. of *bô*.

744. *Obi ñkyerę obi se, 'Tọ ñkyene di'.* (226)

No one shows another, saying, 'Buy salt and eat'.

Ñkyene. See note on No. 577.

745. *Obi nnim a, obi kyere.* (265)

If one man does not know, another man explains.

746. *Obi nnim adekyę mu asem.* (272)

No one knows the story of to-morrow's dawn.

Adekyę mu asem. *Adekyę mu*, is an adjectival phrase, qualifying *asem*.

747. *Obi mpe obi yiye.* (317)

No one wishes well for another.

One might be tempted perhaps to translate this, 'There are some (lit. is one) who do (lit. does) not wish well for others' (lit. for another), but this would be a distortion of the literal words and of the sense. On second thoughts, the saying is not quite so callous, selfish, and wanting in feeling as it might appear to us. Primitive man had very little scope for sentimentality or even sentiment, and the rough, wild, dangerous life gave a man plenty to do to think of his own welfare without troubling overmuch about his neighbour's affairs, nor does it necessarily mean he wished his neighbour evil, but simply expresses the *natural* wish that any luck going might come his own way.

748. *Obi ntó ntasu nto fam', mfa ne tekrema mfa.* (360)

No one expectorates on the ground and then takes his tongue and licks it up (lit. takes it up).

749. *Obi ntųęn Firaw ansă-na wahoro ne tăm.* (390)

No one waits (to reach) the Volta river before washing his cloth.

Firaw. The Volta, one of the largest rivers in the Colony, forming its eastern boundary.

750. *Obi se, oęsoa wo a, wunse se, 'Menantew'.* (408)

When some one says he will carry you, you do not say, 'I shall walk'.

Menantew. Future tense; *menantew* with a narrow instead of a broad sound to the vowel *e* would be Present tense.

751. *Obi se okyeę wo amirika a, huruw fıęe kwankyeę, na fa akyiri nę anim to no ho.* (413)

When some one says he can run faster than you, jump (and) fall to

the road-side and leave the way open for him behind and before.

So typical this perhaps of the African mind, enervated (one must remember) by a climate that even at times converts the European to this sad philosophy. Cf. also No. 752.

752. *Obi señ wo a, mǎ onseñ wo ; na ono nso wo obi a oseñ no.* (422)

When some one excels you, let him excel you; as for him, he again has some one who excels him.

Onseñ. Imperative.

753. *Biribiara nye yaw se aniwu.* (464)

There is nothing that hurts like shame.

Aniwu. Deriv. *ani* and *wu*. Lit. death of eye, i. e. shame.

754. *Biribi wo soro a, etɔ̃a se ebɛba fam'.* (472)

Whatever is above must come down to the earth.

A dimly conscious recognition by some native Newton of one of nature's great laws. Cf. Proverb No. 241.

755. '*Bɔ me na memmo wo,*' *nye agoru.* (481)

'Hit me, but I must not hit you,' is not play.

Memmo. Neg. of *bɔ*.

756. *Wobɔ ahina hõ a, na wuhũ nea okã̃m da.* (485)

When you tap the pot, you see where the crack is.

Da. Lit. lies.

757. *Wode tekrema si awowa a, wuntumi mponi no.* (770)

When you place your tongue in pawn, you cannot redeem it. (A word once spoken cannot be unsaid.)

Mponi. *Pon* means literally to pull off or strip off, hence to remove, take back. A common use of the word is to 'dismiss' from work or parade, 'to break off'. Cf. the Scotch, 'to scale', meaning 'to disperse'.

758. *Ade ketewa na wode susuw kese.* (807)

It is a small thing that is taken to measure a big thing.

Ade. See note on No. 85, *me dea*.

Wode. Translated by the passive.

759. *Ade-pa na eton nehõ.* (809)

The good thing sells itself.

Na. This particle marks the subject as being definite or emphatic and is here rendered by the definite article.

760. *Ade yera a, na ewo nipa nsam'.* (819)

When a thing is lost, then it is in some one else's hand (possession).

761. *Wo ade ye fe a, obi na okã kyere wo, na enye woanikasa na wokã.* (822)

When you possess something that is beautiful, it is some one else who tells you (so) and not you yourself who speak (about it).

Na. Emphatic, translated by 'it is'.

Okã kyere. To tell; *kasa kyere*, to instruct, teach. *Kyere* in conjunction with another verb almost takes the place of the English preposition 'to'. In common with the genius of many African languages, in Ashanti verbs take the place of prepositions.

762. *Wo de anye yiye a, wonkofa obi de nye wo de.* (824)

When what you have is not good, you do not go and take what belongs to some one else.

Wo de. See note on *me dea*, No. 85.

763. *Dua a ebewo wo ani no, wobu so, na wonsen āno.* (994)

You break off the point of the stick that is about to pierce your eye; you do not sharpen the point.

No. A particle introducing an adverbial clause of time (as *yi*). Lit. 'when (*no*) a stick. . .' &c.

764. *Dua a etõ nãm na āno hyew.* (999)

It is the stick that the meat is roasted on that gets the end burned.

Na. Emphatic particle.

765. *Dua biara nsow nnyã ñfũireñ da.* (1004)

No tree ever bore fruit without first having flowers.

766. *Dua biakõ nye kwae.* (1006)

One tree does not make a forest.

Kwae. See note on No. 92, *wuram'*.

767. *Dua mfa mfe aduasã ñkyea, na womfa afe koro ntẽe no.* (1011).

A tree does not grow bent for thirty years that one should (expect to) straighten it in one.

Mfe aduasã. Lit. thirty years, but thirty is also used to mean

a number greater than can be conveniently reckoned, and, curiously enough, the number 3 is sometimes used in a similar sense. The gap perhaps represents an immense period of progress.

768. *Dua kɛsɛ bu a, brofɛrɛ na esi anaɪmu.* (1012)

When a great tree breaks (and falls), the papaw tree takes its place.

Brofɛrɛ. Deriv. *Obũroni* (European) and *ɛfɛrɛ*, (a native indigenous gourd).

Anaɪmu. Lit. in the foot (marks), i.e. instead of.

769. *Dua kɛsɛ bu a, nɛ mma bubu wɔ nɛ hɔ̃ kwa.* (1013)

When a great tree has fallen, its children (young shoots or seeds) burst forth from it in vain. (They will soon die once the sap has dried up.)

Wɔ. See note on No. 240.

770. *Dua si akurā a, nɛ ntini wɔ fi.* (1016)

When a tree stands in a small village, its roots are in the houses.

771. *Dua taɪ wɔ a, na ɛbu bɔ wɔ.* (1020)

When a tree hates you, it breaks (and) falls on you.

Here the idea is of a (to us) inanimate object (possibly in connexion with its being the abode of a spirit), being endowed with a human attribute, perhaps not till something happened that *demanded a reason*, here the falling of the tree.

772. *Wɔmfá ade anum nto aduonum hɔ̃.* (1083)

Four things are not compared with forty.

Aduonum. Lit. 4×10 , four tens, the numbers from 20 to 90 being so formed, $20 = \text{two tens}$, $30 = \text{three tens}$, and so on. The origin of almost all the numbers seems lost, as is usually the case. 4, *anan*, is probably the same word as *anan*, feet, i.e. $2 \text{ hands} + 2 \text{ feet} = 4$. *Edu*, plur. *adu*, is in all probability the same root as *du*, to reach, to arrive at, meaning all the fingers and all the toes have been 'reached', i.e. counted. 11, 12, &c., are expressed by $10 + 1$, $10 + 2$, &c.

773. *Wɔ fi nɛ wɔ fi.* (1121)

Your house is your own house.

774. *Afisɛm nye atamagow na wɔasi ahatá gua sò.* (1136)

A private matter is not like the old cloth that has been spread to dry in the market-place.

Afīsem = *Ofī asem*.

Ahatá. Subjunctive.

775. *Wobeforo dua a, wofi n'ase na womfi soro.* (1145)

When one would climb a tree, one begins from the bottom and not from the top.

776. *Mframa mmae a, na fiveree mu ye krānā.* (1152)

It is before the wind comes that the long grass is motionless.

Mmae. Aorist; when used as here negatively and with the particle *a*, translated by, 'before' or 'not yet'.

777. *Afuw mu nni biribi a, ewo krānānā.* (1174)

If a plantation has nothing else in it, it has at least silence.

Nni. Neg. of *wo*, to have, to possess; see note on No. 240.

778. *Agoru, wogoro no tipén.* (1214)

Play, you play with one your own size.

Wogoro. *Goro* is here transitive, governing the pronoun *no*, in the accusative. Lit. 'play you play it . . .'

779. *Ahina hō hyēhyē no, na nsu na ewom'.* (1383)

When the surface of a pot glistens, that is because there is water on it.

Ahina. A baked clay pot, black and shining when wet, used for carrying water chiefly.

780. *Ahina bō a, na kora ata hō.* (1381)

When the water-pot breaks, the calabash in it remains (unharmcd) beside it.

The woman going for water carries *inside* the water-pot a small calabash for a scoop to take the water to fill the pot; on returning, this is left inside and helps to prevent the water splashing about.

781. *Wo hō ye deñ a, wonye bānu adiŭma.* (1390)

Though you may be strong, you do not do two men's work.

Bānu. The numerals from 1 to 9 when qualifying a noun which denotes a person have the prefix *ba* added, e.g. *bako*, *banu*, *basa*, &c. Cf. the prefix *ba* in Hausa, *Ba-hausha*, *Ba-ture* and *Ba-ntu*.

782. *Wo hō nye deñ a, na wuse, 'Kahiri nye'.* (1391)

When you are not strong, then you say, 'The head-rest is no good'.

783. *Ahōōfe ntua kaw.* (1397)

Personal beauty does not pay a debt.

Kaw. See note on No. 54.

784. *Wohye afiri a, wuñwu agyañ.* (1469)

When you stand on (fall in ?) a trap (and are killed), you do not die from an arrow (wound).

Agyañ. See note on No. 522, *tafoni*, and No. 29.

785. *Wokañ nantivi a, wokañ ne dūa.* (1522)

When you count cattle, you count their tails.

Dūa. Tail, lit. stick.

786. *Woko obi fi, na okotow ho a, wummisa no aqua.* (1566)

When you go to some one else's house, and the owner is squatting there on the ground, you do not ask him for a stool.

Okotow. See note on No. 367.

Wummisa. Neg. of *bisa*.

787. *Woko kūrow bi mu na wuse, 'Mammeto nnipa bi wo ha' a, wose wo se, 'Yeaiñhũ onipa a waba'.* (1578)

If you go to some one else's town and say, 'I have not met any one here so far (of importance)', they (the town's people will retort and) say, 'We have not been aware that some one has come (to our town)'.

Mammeto. Lit. I have not come and met.

Yeaiñhũ. Aorist tense.

788. *Woñkoo obi afum' da a, wuse, 'Me ñkō ne kùafó.* (1587)

If you never went to any one else's farm, (you would) say, 'I alone am a farmer'.

Woñkoo. Past tense, formed by lengthening of final vowel.

Afum'. See note on No. 709.

Kùafó. For suffix *fo* see note on No. 78, *kontromfĩ*.

789. *Yekum bi ansã-na yeapam bi.* (1816)

Some are killed before others are put to flight.

790. *Woñkúm mmarima a, womfá mmea.* (1819)

If the men are not slain, the women are not carried off.

791. *Okwañ a wunsuro mu, na aboa kyere wo mu.* (1888)

It is the path you do not fear that the wild beast catches you on.

Na. Emphatic particle. See No. 1.

792. *Okwantenni nim asem-kã, na onnim asekyere.* (1901)

The traveller (may) tell all he has seen (on his journey), but he cannot explain (all).

Asekyere. *Ase*, lit. down, bottom, base; hence origin, meaning.

793. *Okwañ wõ asõ.* (1893)

A path has ears.

794. *Nkyene fi nsum' na wõhata, na wõde gu nsum' hõ ara bio.* (1940)

Salt is procured (by evaporation) from water, yet it is taken and put back there in the water again.

Nkyene. See note on No. 577.

795. *Nkyene nse nehõ se, 'Meye de'.* (1942)

Salt does not address itself and say, 'I am agreeable (to the taste)'.

796. *Akyene anim da hõ a, wonnyae nyañ ñkyeñ.* (1937)

When the face of a drum is there (to beat), you do not leave that to beat the side.

Nyañ. *Yañ*, an onomatopoetic word, well illustrating the 'yang yang' (cf. twang) given forth by the native drum. Drums are here not beaten with the padded stick we generally use, and hence do not give out the booming sound usually associated with them. The drumstick is generally one bent somewhat in the shape of the figure 7, the face of the drum being hit with the short end.

797. *Wokyere onipa akunse na wokum no a, enye no yaw.* (1951)

When you have a just reason for seizing a man and killing him, you do not hurt him (by doing so).

Akunse. Deriv. *kum* and *ase*. Lit. 'a foundation for killing'.

798. *Nãm nni hõ nti na wõde mmere ye ñkwañ.* (2077)

It is because there is no meat that mushrooms are taken to make soup.

Nni. Neg. of *wõ*.

799. *Nea wadi bem nsoaa oquañ ða.* (2150)

He who has won his case never yet carried the sheep.

Nsoaa. Past tense.

Oquañ. A fine, and so many sheep, is a usual judgement in native courts.

800. *Nea wadi fo na okasa.* (2151)

He who is guilty is the one who has much to say.

Na. Here rendered by 'the one', emphatic.

801. *Nea oko anadičogoru nnyã kaw a, nea oda anadičo dan mu na onyã kaw ana ?* (2186)

When he who goes out to dance all night does not get into trouble (lit. debt), is he who sleeps in his bed-chamber likely to ?

Anudičogoru. Lit. play by night.

802. *Nea wobekum wo nne ne se wobekum wo 'kyêna no ; mã woñkum wo nne na kohome prekõ.* (2195)

They who were coming to kill you to-day, but say they will come to kill you on the morrow (instead), rather let them kill you to-day and rest the sooner.

Wobekum, kohome. Note the auxiliary verbs ('come' and 'go').

Woñkum. Imperative mood.

803. *Nea wompe no, wonsan ñkofa.* (2226)

What is not wanted is not turned back for.

804. *Nea osew kete okwaiñ mu, nè nea okotiaa so no, hena na oyee bone ?* (2236)

Who is in the wrong, he who spread a mat on the path, or he who trod upon it ?

Okotiaa, oyee. Past tenses.

805. *Nne-mma se, tete asoe, wonsoe ho bio ; na deñ nti na wontu tete 'muka abiesã no biakõ na ñka abien ?* (2285)

The children of to-day say they will not any more halt at the ancient halting-place (where their forefathers were wont to alight) ; why then do they not pull up one of the three from time immemorial hearth-stones and let but two remain ?

Asoe. A noun formed from the verb *soe*, to alight. The suffix *e* or *ee* means, a place where. Cf. *anomee*, a drinking-place, &c.

'Muka abiesã. The three conical hearth-stones, made of clay, on which the cooking-pots are placed, also called, *mukia, bukyia.*

806. *Wo ani tra wo ntoñ a, woyera.* (2302)

When your eyes are higher than your eyebrows (i.e. puffed up with pride), you get lost.

Ani tra wo ntɔn. 'Eyes higher than eyebrows', that is, proud, conceited, exactly our own idiom 'supercilious', (*super*, above, and *cilium*, eyelid).

Tra. To go beyond, reach beyond, not to be confused with *tɛna*, *trã*, to sit.

807. *Wunnim asaw a, na wuse, 'Akyene nye de'.* (2337)

When you do not know how to dance, then you say, 'The drum is not sounding sweetly'.

808. *Wo nua sɛrɛ sɔ a, na ɛnyɛ wo na woda so.* (2504)

Your sister's thigh may be plump, but it is not you who lie on it.

Nua. See note on No. 37, *abusã*.

809. *Nsátɛã biakɔ butuw fa ade wo fam' a, entumi.* (2793)

If one finger tries to pick up something from the ground, it cannot.

Nsátɛã. For names of fingers see note on No. 355, *nsa*.

Wo. See note on No. 240.

810. *Asem a wokã serew wo bābi na wokã sũ wo bābi.* (2854)

A matter which in one place is a subject of mirth, in another place is the cause of tears.

Wokã serew . . . wokã sũ. Lit. talk (and) laugh about . . . talk (and) cry about.

811. *Asem a wobese na wobesan no, fa sã mã ɛnka wo tirim.* (2856)

A word that when spoken you would wish back, let it remain (unspoken) in your head.

Sã. This word is rather difficult to explain here, perhaps, 'thus'.

Mã ɛnka. Imperative.

812. *Asem-pa nye okã-nã.* (2873)

A good case is not difficult to state.

Okã-nã. See note on No. 157, *nye-nã*.

813. *Aseñ-kese beba a, ofrankã nsi so.* (2901)

When some really big business is on hand, no flag is flown.

Aseñ-kese = *Asem-kese* (?)

Ofranka. Probably a corruption of the English word 'flag', applied to the emblem of the various companies.

814. *Woso adaka a, na woso ne mu ade.* (2976)

When a box is carried, what is inside the box is carried.

Ne mu. An adjectival phrase qualifying *ade*.

815. *Asõ te se nsenña ; woto mu to mu a, eda.* (2986)

The ears are like a pair of scales ; when more and more are put in, they are weighted down (lit. sleep).

Asõ. This may be either singular or plural, as both have the same form, nor does the singular pronoun *e* in *eda* give any real clue, as the Ashanti idiom commonly uses this third person neuter pronoun for the third person plur.

Nsenña. See note on Ashanti scales and weights, No. 591.

816. *Osram de bērebēre na etiča oman mu.* (3043)

The moon moves slowly, but it crosses the town.

Osram. The moon, also *obosom*.

817. *Ata-panyin nni ikyene mmā entere ata-kūmā anom'.* (3148)

The elder twin does not eat salt that it may trickle into the younger's mouth.

Nni. Neg. of *di*.

Ata-panyin. The first twin to be born is called *ata-panyin*, = elder twin ; the second is known as *obi wom'*, i. e. some one is (left) inside. In no case is one of the twins killed (the ninth child among the Nkoranzas was killed). The second of the twins to be brought forth is considered as having precedence over the first, 'the first merely has been sent to prepare the way for the second'. Twins when born are put in a basin and carried on a woman's head through the town, women following and singing :—

' *Wa wo nta* ',

' *Wa wo nta abien* '.

Lit. She has borne twins,

She has borne two twins.

Every Friday the parents of twins mash yams and eggs (*oto*), in which the usual oil is not added, in order that the mash may be white. White clay is then rubbed on the wrists, and shoulders, and heads of the twins. The parents of twins never partake of any firstfruits without first making an offering to the special fetish of twins, *Abamn*.

An Ashanti chief has always the right to claim twins as his wives.

An attempt is always made to dress twins alike.

818. *Wo ntama biri a, wohoro, na wohyew.* (3163)

When your cloth is dirty you wash it, but you do not burn it.

Wohoro. See note on No. 353.

819. *Wote nsu hõ reguare na obodamfo fa wo tām a, fñefñe bi ansã-na woativ no; nà wumfura bi a, obi besusuw se mo bānu ye abodamfo.* (3202)

When you are down bathing at the water and a madman runs off with your cloth, look for another before you follow him, for if you follow him naked, some one will suppose you are both of you mad.

Wote. See note on No. 366, *te*.

Reguare. Present continued action, expressed by *re*. See also note on No. 353, *hohoro*.

Obodamfo. *Bõ dam*, to be mad. For suffix *fo* see note on No. 78, *kontromfĩ*.

Woativ. Aorist tense.

Bānu. See note on No. 781.

820. *Tete abe, womfá nye ñkwañ.* (3236)

Old palm nuts are not used to make soup.

Womfá nye. For double negative see note on No. 33, *nsisi*.

821. *Tete ara ne nne.* (3239)

History repeats itself. Lit. The very same ancient (things) are to-day.

Tete. Deriv. perhaps *te*, to be, to live, hence by reduplication, to express emphasis, lasting, old.

822. *Etĩ nye brofere na woapae mu ahũ mu asem.* (3265)

The head is not the papaw fruit that it should be broken to see the thoughts inside.

Brofere. See note on *brofere*, No. 768.

823. *Owĩa wõ soro na ehychye sã yi, na menné se ebeben fam'.* (3524)

The sun is up above and it can burn like this, but how much more (could it scorch) if it came down near to earth.

Owĩa. See note on No. 1, *asase*.

Menné. Neg. of *de*.

824. *Wĩase wotrã no bānu bānu.* (3525)

In the world all things are two and two.

Wĩase. See note on No. 1, *asase*.

Bānu bānu. See note on No. 781.

825. *Obi ñkyi koko na onni ne mma.* (239)

No one makes a fowl taboo and then eats its chickens.

Ñkyi . . . onni. For double negative see note on No. 33, *nsisi*.
Onni from *di*.

826. *Obi ñkyi pete nni ne ñkesua.* (240)

No one makes a vulture taboo and then eats its eggs.

Pete. Also *kokosakyi*.

827. *Aduan bi a wunhũũ bi da wɔ wo nã nè wo agya muka so no, na nea wukyi neñ.* (1030)

Some food, the like of which you have never seen on your mother's or your father's cooking hearth, that is the kind you make taboo.

Nã . . . agya. Note the mother is given precedence in speech as in reality. See notes on No. 37, *abusũa*.

Muka. See note on 805.

Neñ = Ne no.

828. *Nea ahõodeñ kyi ne kom.* (2172)

What strength makes taboo is hunger.

Kyi. See note on No. 89 and No. 132.

829. *Obi nsõ dae, ñko nea wɔbekum no.* (339)

No one dreams of going to where they will kill him.

Lit. no one dreams (and) goes to . . ., i. e. no one dreams he is going to be killed at a certain spot and deliberately goes there; but the expression appears to be understood also in the loose sense in which we use it in English 'no one dreams of', &c.

830. *Tete ka asõm'.* (3238)

Ancient things remain in the ears. (Tradition survives).

Tete. See note on No. 821.

1919 Jackson Sudan.pdf

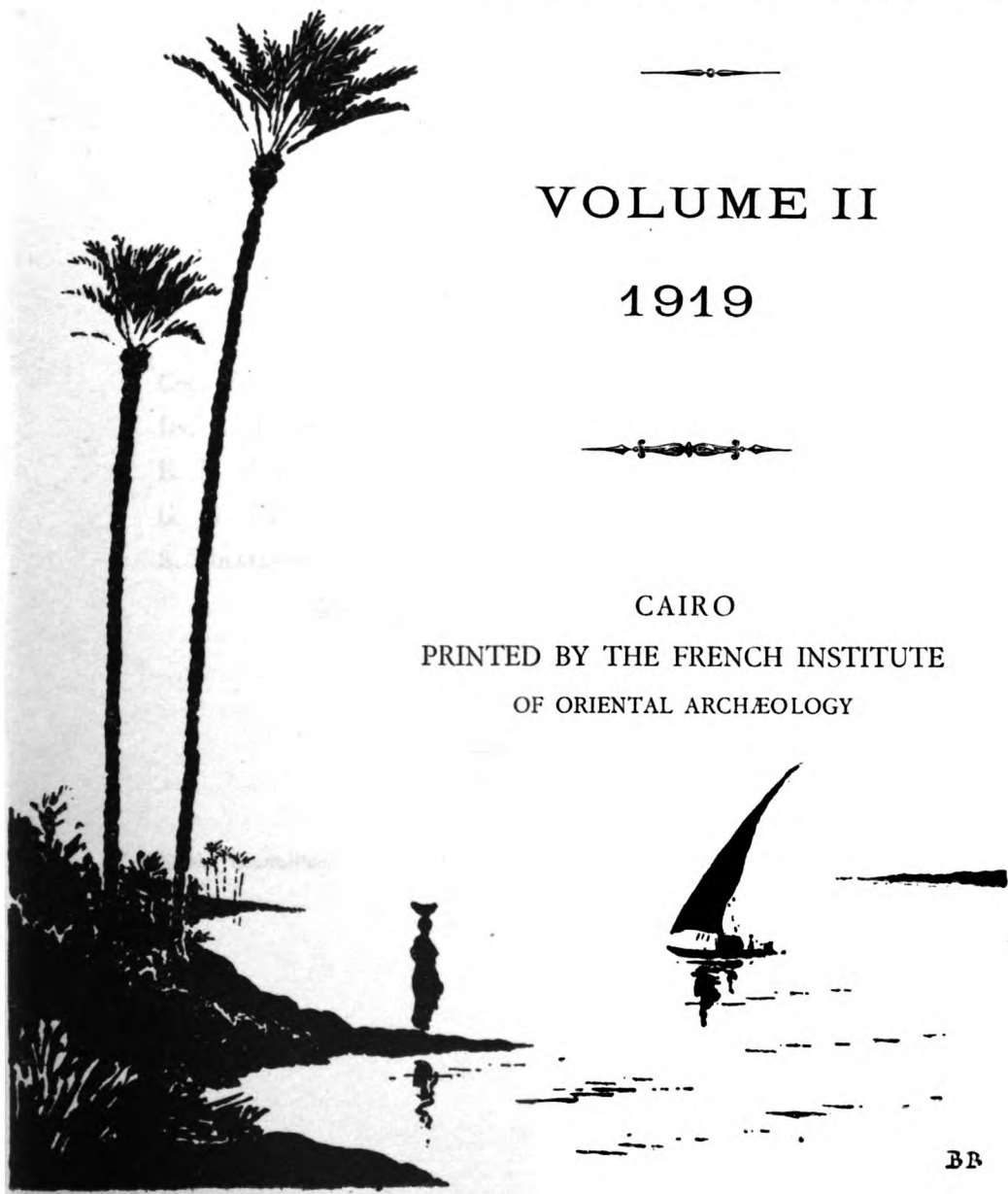
SUDAN NOTES AND RECORDS

VOLUME II

1919

CAIRO

PRINTED BY THE FRENCH INSTITUTE
OF ORIENTAL ARCHÆOLOGY



BB

SUDAN PROVERBS

BY H. C. JACKSON.

The natives of the Sudan have a fund of proverbs particularly in rhyming form. Many of these are common to other parts of the Arabic speaking world, but, as far as possible, only those peculiar to the Sudan have been recorded here, together with the local interpretation put upon them in the Blue Nile Province : possibly a somewhat different meaning attaches to them elsewhere in the Sudan, and it would be interesting to compare any varieties of interpretation there may be. For other Arabic proverbs the reader is referred to the collection made by Mrs. Singer : a few of these are quoted below but only where the explanation given in that collection appears to be wrong or where no interpretation of them is given at all.

Arabs and Sudanese alike have a distinct sense of humour (though it may be truism to say so) and much appreciate the quick thrust and parry of smart repartee : an ability to make a neat and epigrammatic reply furnishes a useful passport to the good wishes of the natives of this country and puts the official on terms that render it a simpler matter to handle questions that crop up in the course of his administrative duties. So, in dealing with an Arabic speaking population, the knowledge of a few proverbs may have a definite value — by causing the people to laugh and thus put into the official's hands «that cypher key wherewith we decypher the whole man». Any one can learn a few proverbs by heart to quote when occasion demands while most of us, unfortunately, can only joke with deeficulty, more especially in an alien tongue.

1. الامه عربانه ما يكسى خالته ⁽¹⁾ «He whose mother is naked is not likely to clothe his aunt». In other words, Charity begins at home. A somewhat similar proverb is in use in Egypt : الزيت ان ما كَفَّ البيت حُرِّم على الجامع «if there is no oil in the house one cannot very well give it to the mosque».

⁽¹⁾ Note that *Ji* is the Sudan form of the relative pronoun corresponding to the Egyptian *Elli*. — Ed.

2. ملكين فوق ككر كان دا غاب داك حضر «Two kings on the same throne, when one is absent, the other is present». There is some divergence of opinion as to the exact meaning. A *kakar* is the name of the so-called throne on which the Fung Kings sat : the term is rather a misnomer as the throne in question seems to have consisted of little more than a sugar box with two sides removed. Another kind of *kakar* is in possession of Hamad el Nil Abd el Bāgi, the Fiki (parish priest) of Tayiba, but this only dates from about the year 1840, two decades after the kingdom of the Fungs had been destroyed by Ismail Pasha. This particular «throne» is about 12 inches high and 24 inches long.

The obvious parallel that there cannot be two Kings in Brentford does not appear to be a correct one; the usual explanation given is that the proverb applies to a man who is of such importance that he is always conspicuous : either the sun or the moon is always shining upon him. We may compare the saying that the sun never sets upon the British Empire⁽¹⁾.

3. أَلْمَا يَخْدُم ضَرَاعَهُ لَمَّا النَّهَارُ يَحْمَرُّ يَخْدُمُوهُ الرِّجَالُ لَمَّا يَعْمَى «He who does not work when the dawn reddens, will have to work for others when he is blind». The same sort of idea is contained in the Egyptian proverb : «القرش الأبيض ينفع في اليوم الأسود» «white money is useful in a black day»; in other words, put a little bit away for a rainy day. Similarly : «لحس مسيتي وأبات مهيتي» «I lick my strop and sleep happily»; it is better for me to lick my strop myself instead of getting someone else to do it; heaven helps those who help themselves.

4. منشان عيني تُكْرَمُ ألف عيني «For the sake of one eye a thousand eyes are honoured»; «love me love my dog» is almost the idea. The illustration usually given is that of the followers of a Fiki who stop at a village and are treated hospitably on account of their connection with the holy man.

5. الكلب ينبع والجمال يغوت «The dog barks, but the camel passes on», one of the neatest of the Sudan proverbs that has often been quoted with effect

⁽¹⁾ We have heard this used not as proverb but as a riddle, the answer being : «the Sun and the Moon». — Ed.

when a harassed official has to calm the ruffled feelings of some person who imagines that his so-called *sheraf* (honour) has been insulted by a junior.

There is some difference of opinion as to whether «the camel» refers to the camel itself or its rider, but in any case the meaning — that a man of importance need not bother about the snapping and snarling of the common mob — is plain : an acquaintance with the supercilious hauteur of the animal makes the former alternative preferable and, in point of fact, the superior airs apparently assumed by the camel are generally recognised by the Arabs themselves who state they are due to the fact that the camel knows the hundredth attribute of Allah, although such knowledge has been withheld from man.

6. *بأ ساعي وين الراعي* «Thou owner of herds, where is the herdsman?». If a man has flocks or herds, he must go to the expense of hiring some one to look after them.

7. *جزا المعروف اربعة كفون* «The reward of kindness is four slaps», rather a cynical view to take of human character though one that finds many parallels in Arabic. One of the commonest of these used in the Sudan is as follows : *ايدى فى خشمك صباعك فى عينى* «my hand in your mouth, your fingers (fist) in my eye». I gave you to eat with my own hand and you retaliated by giving me a black eye.

A more generous expression is also quoted locally, though of alien origin : *ان أخا الوفى من يسعى معك ويضر نفسه لينفعك* «the true friend is he who goes with you and harms himself to help you».

8. *وطنى ولا ملو بطنى* «My home before my stomach». Better poverty at home than riches abroad. «Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?» «There is no place like home.»

9. *جمل الحوش ولا شيخ العرب* «A camel in the compound rather than a Sheikh of the nomad Arabs». In its narrower signification this proverb is said to be only in use in large towns and is not employed even in villages. If a rich nomad with matrimony in his eye came to the house of a townsman and offered two hundred camels as a dowry, the father of the girl would refuse in the phrase quoted above, the implication being that townspeople are civilised clean individuals, while the nomads are a dirty bar-

baric crowd. Most people will find themselves in agreement with the sentiment expressed in the latter half of the sentence, though acquaintance with some of the denizens of the larger towns of the Sudan leads one to suppose that the towns-people generally take rather an exalted view of their own cleanliness. At any rate the idea is that poverty with a clean respectable member of town society is preferable to the uncertainties of a wandering life with a rich but unwashed nomad husband and is illustrative of the deep-rooted antipathy that exists between sedentary and nomadic Arabs. The proverb also has a somewhat wider interpretation that comfortable penury is better than uncomfortable plenty. « Better is an handful with quietness than both hands full with travail and vexation of spirit. »

An instance of the application of this proverb occurred quite recently where a certain Mamur wished to purchase two bulls from a nomad Arab in Kordofan; the owner refused in the words of this proverb, in spite of having been offered a very good price, and stated that he knew his bulls well and, as they could carry his children without throwing them off, he did not wish exchange them for others of uncertain temper that might always be putting his offspring on the ground. If he sold his old bulls, he would have no guarantee that he would not have a good deal of trouble with his new ones and this would not compensate him for the fact that (as far as money was concerned) he had made a profit over the transaction.

A rather similar proverb is also in use : « قرد يسليني ولا غزالاً يبكي » an ape to amuse me is better than a gazelle that makes me weep »; a plain but cheerful wife is better than a pretty one that annoys you.

10. « كوس لك غراباً جزّه » Look for a crow and pluck it ». This is a proper reply if a man comes and asks you to do something in his interest or against your own.

11. « كثرة النقر بتكسر الحجر » Constant dropping of water breaks the stone ». There is some uncertainty as to the exact meaning of the word *naqar*, which is also explained as continual nagging on the part of a shrewish wife. The comparison of continually dropping water with the ceaseless wagging of a shrew's tongue is not uncommon. Solomon, who had a somewhat extensive acquaintance with the weaker sex, was quite alive to the similarity between them when he wrote : « A continual dropping in a very

rainy day and a contentious woman are alike». The word *naqar* is commonly used in the Sudan of a fish nibbling the bait off a hook. Mrs. Singer spells the word with a *K*, but the balance of opinion (at any rate in Wad Medani) inclines to a *Q*; and if the meaning given above is the correct one, a parallel may be found in the sentence : الماء مع رقتة يقطع الحجر مع شدته : «water although gentle breaks a stone in spite of its hardness».

12. القرد الكبير ما يتعلم الرقص بها «An old ape cannot learn to dance». The same idea is contained in the Egyptian proverb : بعد ما شاب ودّوه الكتّاب : «after his hair had become grey, they sent him to school».

13. جَرَادَة في الكف ولا ألف طائره «A locust in the hand is better than a thousand flying things»; similarly عصفورة في الأيد ولا عشرة على الشجرة «a bird in the hand is better than ten upon a tree».

14. العبدّه بليله بعشّي «He who has a little *belila* (millet soaked in water) can join the feast» : if a number of neighbours have met together for a dinner a friend who only has a little to bring to the meal may join them with what he has to contribute; if he has nothing to share among them, he cannot do so. The idea seems to be the same as that contained in the proverb «when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window», or, «wealth maketh many friends, but the poor is separated from his neighbour».

15. بليلة المباشر ولا ضبيكة المكاشر «Better is a little *belila* from a man who smiles upon you than a slaughtered sheep from one who frowns». «Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.»

For *debiḥat* the word *ṭabikhat* (cooked meats) is sometimes substituted, but the meaning is the same.

«La façon de donner vaut mieux que ce qu'on donne.»

A similar proverb is quoted in Egypt : لا تيني ولا تعديني «welcome me rather than give me a meal».

16. ابن العبدّه منه الخير جبدّه ومنه الشريدى «The son of a slave is a long way removed from good, but the bad is near». «You cannot gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles». The sentiment is a common one and the Spaniards have proverbs to the same effect, that it is of no use to seek pears off an elm-tree and that you will never make a good arrow of a

pig's tail. Other proverbs with the same meaning may be quoted, *e. g.* «ابن الخادم لئيم» the son of a slave is a vicious creature».

17. البان لك بان للكاتير في ام صويبينه. «Take care that the fate of the Kamātir at Um Suweibina does not overtake you too». During the first years of the xixth century, the Fung Kings (who had ruled a great part of the Sudan from the end of the xvth century onwards) had lost nearly all their former authority and were, for all practical purposes, in the hands of their Hameg advisers. From time to time however various supporters of the old dynasty attempted to restore the authority of the Fungs. In the year 1805 a certain Sheikh called Kamtūr came to blows with Mohammed Abu Rish, the ally of the Hameg viziers. A fight took place in which the latter was wounded in the hand. After the fight, the principal religious leaders reconciled the two factions but, in spite of this, Kamtūr and his followers treacherously attacked Mohammed Abu Rish at a place called Um Suweibina, not very far from Wad Medani. Twelve of the followers of Sheikh Kamtūr were killed and the incident is now quoted as an example of the fate of those who do not respect treaties. Prosit omen. A somewhat similar proverb to the effect that unless a man behaves properly he will meet with the fate that overtook Imam Wad Ḥabūba (when he led a rising against the Sudan Government in 1908) is generally coming into use in the Blue Nile Province; but it has not yet crystallised into epigrammatic form.

18. لا بد للمرحه من جدل. «A running animal must find a root». The usual illustration of this saying is that of a donkey running about with its head in the air as if it was Lord of creation; suddenly it trips over an unseen root of a tree lying on the ground; «Pride goeth before a fall». The proverb is applied in a different sense to a man who is always complaining about something or other and when he really does get into trouble no one helps him out. The same sort of idea is contained in the tale of the boy who was always crying out «wolf! wolf!».

19. كل مرة ما تسلم الجرّة. «Every time the bowl is not safe». «The pitcher does not go so often to the water, but it comes home broken at last». Another proverb with a similar meaning is also quoted : الحجر الدائر لا بد : من كسرة «the rolling mill-stone must inevitably get broken».

20. أرباب الدرت مسكين الرشاش «He who imagines at the time of harvest that he is really well off and need not trouble to cultivate, finds when the rains come round again that he is a poor man». «The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold, therefore shall he beg in harvest and have nothing.» The proverb is applied in Wad Medani to a certain Sudanese Officer now on pension who does not work when it is time to plant his crops and has to beg or borrow money when other people have gathered their harvest.

21. أبيض جناح اسود مراح «White wings, black house». «All is not gold that glitters»; «fine feathers do not make fine birds». The proverb is applied to a man who wears white clean clothes as if he was very well to do whereas his home is dirty and his cupboard bare.

22. الناقة التباح حارسه لجناها من المرفعي «The she-camel cries out and guards her young from the hyena». If a man has two wives, one of whom has borne him children while the other is barren, the former is always bothering her husband for money and so on in the interests of her child and to prevent the husband from lavishing all his wealth upon the barren wife.

23. اما بتاكله ما بيخنتك «What you do not eat cannot choke you», if you are accused of stealing a sheep and have not done so, you can face the judge with a clear conscience: a somewhat more sanguine belief in the administration of justice in the Sudan than is contained in the Egyptian proverb في الحبس ياما في مظالم «how many are unjustly in gaol!».

24. ان غلبك سدّها وبتع قدها «If you are unable to shut the hole, open it still more widely». If you are in debt and cannot face your creditors, spend still more freely, advice that has been followed in other communities. «In for a penny, in for a pound».

25. ان ضاق بيك الامر اشرب لك قزازه خمر «If you are in trouble, drink a bottle of wine», a phrase in common use (and practice) among the Ja'lin, Kawahla, Khawālda and Arakiin in Medani District.

Solomon, who appears to have been a man of the world, again has a parallel: «Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more».

H. C. JACKSON.

1920 Burlin-Simango Ndau.pdf



SONGS AND TALES FROM THE DARK CONTINENT

Recorded from the Singing and the Sayings

of

C. KAMBA SIMANGO

Ndau Tribe, Portuguese East Africa

and

MADIKANE ČELE

Zulu Tribe, Natal, Zululand, South Africa

By

NATALIE CURTIS



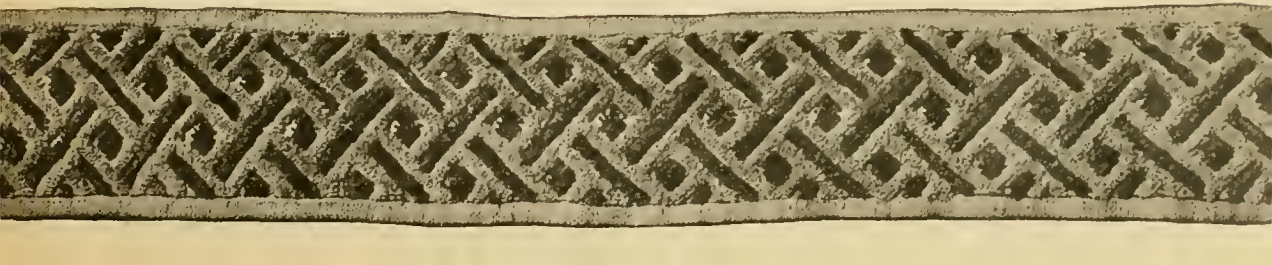
New York

•

G. SCHIRMER

•

Boston





C. KAMBA SIMANGO

In native dress

Graduate Hampton Institute, Virginia, U. S. A.

Student at Columbia University, New York

(Background, hand-woven African fabrics of native cotton)

AFRICAN PROVERBS

I

Ka kulili'la mu ha'na che ha'mba.

We weep in our hearts like the tortoise.

Meaning: The tortoise has no means of defence. He can only draw himself into his shell and weep in his own heart where none can see, while he patiently awaits his fate. So under oppression and injustice we are defenceless, nor may we even show our tears, which must not fall down our cheeks, but only backward, silently, into our hearts.

This proverb refers to tyranny in every form, whether that of conquerors over a people, rulers over a tribe, or thoughtless parents over children.

II

Ho've ji no tere'la mula'mbo wa'jo.

Fish follow their own river.

Meaning: Even as fish follow their own course with their own shoal, so there are people of narrow sympathies who will never help outsiders, but only their own family and friends.

III

A ndi chala'mbi kunu'ma pa cho'to
ngo po nda'li.

I do not refuse to yield fat when
on the fire.

Meaning: I must yield when caught in the press of circumstances.

IV

A ndi nyi'swi nge chi'lo chichi'na
mulo'mo.

I am not vanquished by a thing
which has no mouth.

Meaning: Man must persevere. The thing that we are trying to achieve has no mouth to tell us that we shall fail. We must try until we find the way to success, for discouragement lies only in our own faint heart. Failure comes from within.

V

Muli'lo wo mba'va a u ko'twi.

Warm not yourself at the fire of
a thief.

Meaning: If a thief steal corn or meat, he builds a fire wherewith to roast it, then eats and goes away. If you, in passing, see the fire and warm yourself thereat, you may be taken for the thief. Avoid bad company, or you may be condemned with them, even though innocent.

VI

Manthe'de a no venga'na pa kurg'a
na pa mvu'mvu a no besa'na.

Baboons quarrel while eating. In
danger they help one another.

Meaning: There are many families who quarrel in times of happiness, peace and plenty; but in sickness or danger they stand together and help one another.

1920 Smith Ila.pdf

THE
ILA-SPEAKING PEOPLES
OF
NORTHERN RHODESIA

BY

REV. EDWIN W. SMITH

HONORARY CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
AUTHOR OF "A HANDBOOK OF THE ILA LANGUAGE," ETC.
CHIEF TRANSLATOR OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ILA

AND

CAPTAIN ANDREW MURRAY DALE

MAGISTRATE IN THE BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY'S ADMINISTRATION

Θεστορίδη, θνητοῖσιν ἀνώλιστων πολέων περ
οὐδὲν ἀφραστότερον πέλεται νόου ἀνθρώποισιν.

HOMER.

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1920



CHAPTER XXVII

*

PROVERBS, RIDDLES, AND CONUNDRUMS

I. PROVERBS

IN his dealings with the Ba-ila few things help a European more than a knowledge of their proverbs. To be familiar with them gives one a good deal of insight into their character and ways of looking at things, for they express the likes and dislikes of the people in certain directions in quite an unmistakable fashion. And, moreover, these proverbs are taken largely as a rule of life. They are truly "the wisdom of many"—maxims of discreet conduct that have stood the test of ages; they are equally "the wit of one," showing a remarkably shrewd insight into motives, and expressed in a short, concise manner that reflects great credit upon their authors, whoever they may be. Some of them bear their meaning on the surface and we see at once what their equivalents are in our own language. Of others the meaning is not so apparent, but when once explained their appropriateness to the occasion is immediately patent. A knowledge of the proverbs is, then, invaluable to any who wish to appreciate the character of the Ba-ila and especially to those who have direct dealings with them. Many an angry dispute has been silenced, many an inhospitable chief has been rebuked into generosity, many a forward beggar has been reduced to shame, and many a long, diffuse argument has been clinched by the apt quotation of one of these proverbs.

A study of the proverbs is very valuable to the student of the language. It is not an easy study, but the correct

and appropriate use of them will mark the competent speaker. They contain many words that are not heard in ordinary conversation, and also many archaic expressions and grammatical forms. This which, of course, is only a proof of their antiquity, makes translation difficult—natives themselves cannot always explain the significance of these expressions while knowing the meaning of the whole proverb—and one cannot always be sure therefore that he has caught the precise meaning. And, of course, the peculiar flavour of these proverbs largely evaporates in the translating. But, with all allowance for these facts, the man is to be pitied who cannot appreciate the wit and wisdom of these sayings.

In the following pages we transcribe a few examples from a large collection of these proverbs, grouped roughly under headings and accompanied by such elucidation as may be necessary.

The first class contains maxims and precepts, truths verified in the experience of the tribe and inculcated as rules of conduct. Many of them are serious enough, but the laughter is never far away. And laughter, Bergson tells us, "is above all a corrective. . . . Its function is to intimidate by humiliating." The wit pursues a utilitarian aim of general improvement. "By laughter society avenges itself for the liberties taken with it." A Mwila greatly objects to being made fun of, and his susceptibility to ridicule is a powerful instrument in the hands of those who try to improve him. He can often be laughed out of a thing when argument and even force are unavailing.

As a legal maxim we have already quoted : *Kwina mwami owakadizhala* ("No chief ever gave birth to a chief"). The hereditary principle, by which a son follows his father, is unknown to the Ba-ila.

Among the social virtues most appreciated is hospitality, and we are not surprised to find it inculcated in various proverbs. *Mwenzu talangwa ankumu, mulange mwifu* ("A visitor is to be regarded not as to his face but as to his stomach"). *Matako a mwenzu makadikwa* ("The rump of a visitor is made to sit upon"). *Shikwaze tabudi budilo bwa nswi* ("A fish-eagle does not lack fish for food on a

journey ") ; he is sure to find some, and so will you ; only trust people. These sayings illustrate also the ironical wit of the people ; they state what ought to be done, pretending that this is just what is actually being done. That is Bergson's definition of irony. We should add that the quickest way of securing hospitality is simply to quote one of these sayings : what ought to be done is done.

Many of the proverbs aim in this way against certain classes of people, who, like the poor, are always with us, whether our lot is placed in civilisation or in heathenesse.

There are Pharisees even among the Ba-ila. *Kabombwe balamusanana, menzhi balanwa* (" They spurn the frog but drink the water "), i.e. they don't like to find a frog in their drinking-water, but they will drink it after the frog is removed—an apt description of the unctuous rectitude that strains at the gnat and swallows the camel ! A man who claims to be without fault is rebuked by the saying : *Ushiletekambo wakatea inzoka munzhila* (" Mr. No-fault ensnared a snake in the road "), and left it to bite passers-by. Nobody is without blame for something or other !

" The one failing that is essentially laughable is vanity." So Bergson says again ; and many an Ila proverb laughs quietly at men who puff themselves up and despise others. *Kwina mwami owakadila mumpande* (" There is no chief who eats out of an impande shell "). The shell may show his wealth, but when it is a matter of eating the chief must do as ordinary people do—eat out of a dish. Nature confounds social distinctions. That is a way of reminding an arrogant man that he is only human after all. A person who in his conceit is always running others down will be reminded that *Chizhilo chibe chishinka musena* (" Any old pole will stop up a hole in the fence ") : everybody is useful to the community in some way or other. Or he will be told : *Wabakembetema wasandukila masamo nina* (" An axe-shaft is made out of an ordinary piece of wood "). That cuts two ways : an ordinary person can be made of great use ; but, on the other hand, he is not essential ; like an axe-shaft, he is of use only in connection with others (meaning the axe-head) and can easily be replaced. Or again, the conceited person will be told to remember that *Musongo*

wakalukanka, takachidyile; mudimbushi owakweza munshi wakachidya ("A wise man ran on without eating it, a fool coming behind ate it")—meaning that the wise in their own conceits often miss the good things in life. An overbearing stranger may be told, *Muchende tafumpuka matanga obili* ("A bull doesn't enjoy fame in two herds").

A know-all will have quoted to him the Ila equivalent of our saying about teaching one's grandmother: *Uwe muntu takukubudi banoko, kulakubula banji* ("Oh, man, don't try to teach your mother, try others"). Or this: *Mano avhwa mu kaumbuswa* ("Wisdom comes out of an ant-heap"), which means that even a fool knows something. Or this: *Mano takala mutwi omwi* ("Wisdom does not dwell in one head"). Or again, *Mukando mushie lubilo, mano tomushii* ("You may outrun an old man, but you can't outdo him in wisdom"). Or he will be curtly bidden, *Kula ubone twanshi* ("Get grown up and then you will know the things on earth"). These are especially applicable, it will be noticed, to young people anxious to instruct their elders.

Another class needing correction is the grumblers. One who should complain of his food would be exhorted that, *Muchanka wa nyama udi omwi* ("The niceness of meat is one"). That is not true of a epicure, but it is so to a hungry man.

We have many proverbs aimed at evil speakers. *Kamunazaka o mulozhi, shikalaka ulayaya chishi* ("Build rather with a witch than with a false-tongued person, he destroys a community"). *Kaluba mwambi, mwambilwa taluba* ("The speaker may forget, but he who is spoken to does not forget"), i.e. you may forget the insult but the person you insult will not, it will rankle. A scandal-monger will be derided thus: *Wakotokela kuvuya* ("He leaves off work to backbite people"): he's too lazy to attend to his business. The following are two cryptic sayings descriptive of the same kind of person: *Ufulwe mumi tapakwa bwanga* ("A living tortoise is not worn as a charm"); which, whether you see it or not, means that you mustn't speak evil of a living man. *Kazune shimuntwanganya imbula watola u muchenji* ("A treacherous little bird took

an imbula fruit to a muchenzi tree"—a fruit-bearing tree): the idea is that the bird in a fatuous way sought to curry favour with the tree. It is a proverb describing a person who runs his own chief down to another chief, and that chief to his own: a subtle kind of flattery which yet is so very obvious!

Greedy people do not come off scathless from the makers of Ila proverbs. *Mulakumune ku kudya kwalo udikwete insana* ("The great-open-mouth, only in eating is his strength!"). He is like a sack, that will take in all that it will hold; he is good for nothing else. And if he clamours for food that is being kept for an absent member, he is gently reminded: *Udi afwafwi ng'udya twinu, udi kulale tabudi bwinu* ("He that is near should get a little of the fat, the one that is far should not lack plenty").

The Ba-ila are far from being cowards, but they know quite well that discretion is the better part of valour. Or, as they say: *Kabwenga moa ng'uongola* ("It is the prudent hyena that lives long"). A hot-headed man that rushes into danger, and meets disaster, against all warning is thus spoken of: *Ubosha obamuweza* ("It pays them out who hunt for it!").

A laggard will be told: *Ing'ombe insolozhi njinwa menzhi* ("It is the first ox that drinks the water")—when the laggards come up they find it all gone. And he will slyly be spoken of thus: *Inaumpi odia bula* ("The mother wild-dog of the intestine"). That is a good example of the allusive by-speech of the Ba-ila. Nobody would understand it who did not know the tale of the wild-dogs: the mother who used to hunt game for her children until she grew too old; then the poor old thing (in the eyes of the Ba-ila she would be a laughing-stock) had to lag behind, and could only come up with the pack—her children—in time to get a bit of the entrails. So to call a man *Inaumpi* is to poke fun at him, perhaps in a kindly teasing manner.

It is very often said that Africans are deficient in gratitude; it would be truer to say that they feel thankful but do not express it in the same way as we do. *Ozona ozona* is a thanksgiving formula, or, as the Basuto say, *ka moso le ka moso*, both meaning "To-morrow and to-morrow," i.e.

give me it again and again. The proverbs show that an ingrate is spoken against. *Kunavhuna shilumamba, ushinzala udikwete kambukwa* ("Better help a fighting-man than a hungry person, he (the latter) has no gratitude").

Squanderers come in for a share of ridicule. Thus: *Ing'ombe intaka itakanya muchila wayo* ("The prodigal cow threw away her own tail"). An obstinate person, who suffers through not taking advice, will have this thrown at him: *Ngulube wakafwa mu shitamba* ("The pig died in the trap")—against which it was warned.

Levellers, despisers of authority, and kickers against the pricks lay themselves open to many a witty rebuke. *Tatuzanda kasutasuta kei dia namakukwe* ("We do not like the pride of a hen's egg"). It is difficult to see at first where the pride of an egg comes in, but if you look at them lying in the nest you will see that they are all alike; they are republicans, every Jack as good as his neighbour—and that is the pride of an egg! And a person who sets himself on a level with the authorities will quickly be told that in this community the pride of eggs is not to be tolerated! Two proverbs may be quoted which show a discontented person that, while chastening is grievous, it is for his good. *Nevhuluma tedyi mwana* ("Though the lion growls it won't eat its child"). *Namakukwe tafwi kabambala ka nina* ("A chicken does not die of its mother's kicks"). An incorrigible rebel will be reminded by his father or chief: *Chikaya ndachileka* ("I throw away an old useless armlet")—so take heed!

We may pass now to a series of proverbs which contain advice for discreet conduct in various relations of life. A general proverb, pronounced by the Ba-ila to be a very great one indeed, is: *Utotakatila mudilo* ("Do not throw it into the fire"). We have often heard this quoted to a person who is about to commit a foolish action; it means: Be careful! You throw away your chance, it won't come again! Perhaps we may also put under the same heading a proverb which is the very reverse of the golden rule: *Wanchita mwenzha-kabotu, ame ndakuchita mwenzha-kabotu: wanchita mwenzha-bubi ame ndakuchita mwenzha-bubi* ("If you do me a good turn, I will do you a good turn; if you

do me an evil turn, I also will do you an evil turn"). Of a similar effect is the other : *Nvhuna olwaku muma, amc olwa ku menzhi ndakuvhuna* ("Help me in my need on the bank, and I will help you in yours in the water"). This is explained by one of the tales, in which a hare and a crocodile make a compact of friendship ; the hare to help the crocodile on land, and the crocodile the hare in the water.

Advice is given to masters in dealing with their slaves. It will be discreet for them to show no favour but to treat all alike. *Bana ba manga balauminwa dimwi* ("Twin children are both beaten at the same time")—i.e. if one does wrong they are both beaten ; if your servants all do well you must not single out one for praise, nor, on the other hand, if they all displease should you be angry with any particular one—treat them all alike. And remember, too, *Muzhike wako ulumbwa n'aloboka* ("Your slave is praised after he has run away from you") ; you undervalue him now and treat him with less than justice ; one day, when he runs away, you will begin to appreciate him.

On the other hand, people in a state of dependence are advised against foolish behaviour. *Malelo mazhokaukwa* ("A state of dependence is to be returned to") : so do not anger your master and get dismissed, for one day you may want to go back to him and he won't have you. And again : *Bomba udye malelo* ("Be humble so that you may continue to enjoy the state of dependence you are in").

This is a saying conveying advice to a bridegroom : *Kapadingwa kupa banoko, mukazhi nindavu* ("Give to your mother, a wife is a lion")—which means, treat your mother better than your wife ; you may have many wives, you can have only one mother.

It is a wise saying that a man should be on good terms with his doctor : *Chenjezha nganga, malwazhi eza bu seka* ("Annoy your doctor and sicknesses will come laughing").

Advice is given to people to keep their friendships in constant repair : *Inzhi ikufwine nj'ikukala* ("The fly that loves you is the one that sits on you")—visit your friends and so show your affection.

People are warned against not keeping their business

to themselves: *Mankulubwiza atole ku mucheche, mukando-noko ulazukula* ("If you tell jokes about him to a child, your fellow adult will find it out"), so exercise discretion in your gossip. *Mubwa ukuwa twabona* ("When the dog barks we see them")—you may not notice strangers approaching until the dogs draw your attention to them; if you want a thing kept quiet don't chatter about it.

So they recognise that walls have ears and little birds carry news. *Kadya maluwo oku mukoa kadikubwene* ("While you are away from home visiting, your own people know all about you"). *Mweemena mu mumbwe umwini mumbwe katelele* ("If you weep in a deep pit the pit even will hear you"). *Udye ka mashiku mashiku adikubwene, udye ka munza munza udikubwene* ("If you eat at night the night sees you; if you eat in the daytime the day sees you")—whatever you do, it is sure to become known. There is a recognition of the fact that experience teaches; and young people who want to run before they can crawl may have this saying quoted to them: *Ma mpinika!* ("Mother, give me a turned-up lip"). Here two words, like our "sour grapes," represent a story with a moral. It is the opening of a conversation between Master Wart-hog and his mother; the little pig wanted a lip turned up by the protrusion of the tusks, like his mother's; the old dame reminded him in answer that he would have to grow first: "I can't turn up your lip," she said, "it is only Leza who can do that."

Another series of proverbs urges the necessity of a man looking out for himself and getting all he can. *Mudimo wa mwami tokasha kudisala injina* ("The work of a chief doesn't prevent one from hunting out one's own fleas")—if you are working for a chief that need not hinder you from minding your own affairs. Again: *Kudya mwami omwi wabula matende* ("If you eat with one chief only, it is because you have no feet"). Get all you can out of them all, even if it mean a little exertion on your part. And do not be backward in asking, remember *Muzhimo udiamba ng'udya nyama* ("The god that speaks up is the one that gets the meat"). If a god is easy-going and doesn't trouble those who neglect to sacrifice to him, he won't get anything;

and if you don't ask you won't get. And, further, if you get a chance do not scruple to extort all you can from anybody: *Kombekache kalazhala bana badi ikumi* ("A young cow will in time bear ten calves"). If you have lent any one anything do not mind playing the usurer; get out of him all he has. That is just what the Ba-ila do; they are terribly hard on each other. And if people find fault with you for attempted extortion remind them that *Ushikoswe wakasukusha butale* ("The rat tried his teeth on the iron"). It may have been foolish, but, then, you never know what you can get until you try.

A more pleasant set of sayings are those used to inspire men with patience and courage. *Luvhwavhwa ndu lumana munda* ("Much coming in and out finishes the field")—so keep at it! *Bushiku bomwi tabubozha muzovu* ("One day is not sufficient to rot an elephant")—Rome was not built in a day. *Ukwatakwata tabudididi* ("He who keeps hold does not lack")—so stick to your work. To a man in great distress one would say: *Nguzi menzhi kumbele* ("There is water ahead")—do not despair. And to a man foolishly afraid: *Ulatia mushinze uina kabwenga* ("You fear the darkness that covers no hyena"). And to brace up a man to a great effort one would say: *Mulombwana muzovu uladikwela* ("A man is an elephant, he is able to draw himself")—i.e. has strength sufficient for his work.

We come now to the second class of proverbs, those expressing what we may venture to call the Ba-ila criticism of life.

Many show a recognition, somewhat cynical, of certain unpleasant facts. For example, that death wipes out our memory from the minds of all but perhaps a few. *Chabola chiya ku beni* ("That which is rotten goes to its owners")—only a few remember the dead. And the injustice of life finds many an expression. *Mukamwami uleba ubeesha bazhike bakwe* ("When a chief's wife steals she puts blame upon her slaves")—a poor man is powerless against the rich and influential. *Mubwa n'akuwa impuwo nja mwini munzhi* ("When a dog barks the fame belongs to the master of the village"). A master takes credit for his

servant's acts. On the other hand, the master discovers sometimes that his position does not give him everything : *Kwachiswa ng'ombe mabala akaya ku mubwa* (" When the ox was sick its colours went—to the dog ")—i.e. the subject married a fine woman, or gained some other advantage that the chief could not get.

The difference between the apparent and the real often finds expression in these proverbs : *Twabona indudi* (" We saw the houses as to the roofs ")—we did not see the interior. There is the suggestion that very often things are not what they seem. *Kusambwa itomba buzhike tabumana* (" You may cleanse yourself, but it is not to say you cease to be a slave ")—let the slave dress as well as he may, he cannot get rid of his real condition. And a man may seem happy and prosperous while really suffering shame and trouble. *Ndaseka budio, meno nchifua*, such a man might say (" I laugh emptily, my teeth are a bone "). Or : *Oka chisa kezhi mwini* (" A man knows his own woe ").

The painful fact that people cannot live long together without some quarrelling is thus expressed : *Matako aswangenene tabudi mutukuta* (" Buttocks rubbing together do not lack sweat ").

There is ample recognition of the fact that men follow the inclination of their minds, and that it is useless to try to force them into channels from which they are averse. *Ufuile mubidi, mozo tofuile* (" You have the body but not the heart ")—you may capture me as a slave, or compel me into marriage with you, but you cannot force me to love you. *Kapuka takashinikizhiwa umbwina mbu katazanda* (" An insect cannot be forced into a burrow which it does not like "). *Udi kwabo tachengwa inshima inkando* (" The man at home in thought is not to be deceived by much porridge ")—you can't retain a home-sick man by offering him plenty to eat. In brief : *Mozo ngu sungwe* (" The heart leads ").

And it is not for another to criticise me if I choose a thing he doesn't like : " de gustibus," etc. *Chikonda utwele* (" The old thing pleases him who married her ")—whatever others may say about it. *Chibi ku bantu ukudi baina nchibotu* (" What is ugly to other people is fair in the

sight of its (a child's) mother")—and it is enough if what a man has satisfies himself.

Of course a man may choose for himself, and choose foolishly, in the face of all remonstrance; well, he must lie on the bed he made. He can't change later, it's too late. *Mulonga owatakazholwa wakwata makobo* ("A river that would not be straightened has bends in it")—you cannot do anything for it now.

And so we come to those proverbs which give expression, more or less clearly, to the fatalism that is so characteristic of the Ba-ila. The inexorability of life, the certainty that trouble is the fate of all men, and that it is hopeless to try to avoid it; those are their feelings. *Ulabuka bwifu* ("It will arise as surely as the stomach"). You don't know how or when; you only know that some time or other a woman will be pregnant; and trouble is just as certain. A cryptic saying is that: *Lufu lwina impwizhi* ("Death has no heifer"), i.e. it comes to all alike, though we have never seen the connection of thought. *Ushikwaze ulelala* ("Even the fish-eagle has on occasion to go to bed hungry"). *Tangala kabotu, mwanashimatwangangu, mapule adi zile* ("Rejoice circumspectly, son of my master, the enemy has come")—be moderate in your exultation, Nemesis is bound to overtake you. *Notangala Leza udikubwene* ("When you exult, God sees you")—and God stands for them as fate, the unconquerable powers of the universe. And if you are very happy, that may be the occasion for a swift disaster to befall you.

We may insert here a number of shrewd sayings of a miscellaneous character: *Mwami tafwi o manza ku matashi* ("A chief will not die with bracelets on his arms"), i.e. in a time of famine. You need not worry about a wealthy man, he can always look after himself in time of need. To the same effect is this: *Mukamwini musozha talangwa imfunda inkando* ("You do not look for a big handful for the owner of the provender"), i.e. the food is in his power, and he will take what he needs. *Ufwile mpeyo tatondezhiwa ku mudilo* ("He who is cold does not need to have the fire pointed out to him")—he will go to it without being told.

So we come to the third class into which we divide Ila proverbs: smart sayings and clever metaphors rather than maxims or precepts, though included with the others in the general term *tushimpi* ("proverbs").

Thus a man deceived by another upon whose promises he was relying may say to him: *Wankuluzha olutalampi* ("You shave me with a blunt razor"). When a person is urged to something he is determined not to do, he may close the argument by ejaculating: *Mani nkuvhunika o lukwi!* ("Until I cover you up with a winnowing basket!")—an impossible feat; he means, never! If a man has done some foolish thing, he will lament by saying: *Ndawala ibwe mu lulu* ("I threw a stone into an ant-heap")—it has gone past recovery.

One of the smartest things of this sort is the saying applied to a person who is overkind, suspiciously anxious to do you a favour: *Ukwete luse lwa mulozhi* ("He has the kindness of a witch").

Thieves are always clever in finding a way out for themselves. It is said of one that he entered a house and stole a mess of boiling porridge; just then the owner appeared in the doorway, and, slipping his prize under his clothes, the thief gave a yell of pain—not altogether feigned—and shouted: *Nkafwile ansengwe afwila balombwanama* ("Let me get outside to die where my fellow-men died"). The owner, thinking he was dying, let him pass, and of course saw him no more. So when a man makes an outrageous excuse, you say: "Yes, let me die outside."

As we have seen, some of these sayings are allusions to what is narrated elsewhere in the folk-tales. Here is another example. It is said that a blind man was going with a friend along a road carrying firewood; somehow he got past the other, and when his friend overtook him he was astonished to find some meat lying beside the blind man. "Oh, you've found meat!" he said. "Yes," was the ready answer, "I am waiting for you to put it on my shoulder." The friend was amazed; how could a blind man find meat? As a matter of fact, the first intimation the blind man had of the meat's presence was the exclamation of his friend. But he said no more and

went off with the meat, leaving his friend still wondering. And the advice a Mwila will give you is: "If a companion suddenly says, 'Here's an axe! here's a hoe!' don't say, 'Whose is it?' but say, 'Yes, my friend, please hand me my axe.'" Or, as they put it: *Waangila adiinsha mbwakachita mofu* ("You seize the fleeting chance, just as the blind man did").

The Ba-ila are adept in expressing things in a round-about way. Sometimes in listening to their conversations, to our amazement we could not catch the drift of a sentence. The words were Ila, sure enough, but conveyed absolutely no sense to us. It was something probably they did not want us to understand.

Even as we are writing this, we hear a man some distance off shouting: *Menso menso kumbo o kwiwe!* ("Eyes, eyes, west and east"). He means to say that travellers are approaching.

2. RIDDLES

The time and place for asking riddles is the evening around the fires. The invariable formula is this: one says *Kako!* ("This!") *i.e.* Here is one for you; and the reply is: *Kakeza* ("Let it come!"). The name for riddle is *kalabi* (plural, *tulabi*), and to answer a riddle satisfactorily is *kulabukulula*. When one propounds a riddle the others make their guesses; if incorrect, he simply repeats it. If they despair of getting the answer, they say: *twazhimina* ("we are lost"). He then tells them and propounds another. There are probably many hundreds of these riddles in circulation and new ones are constantly being made. Some people, even young lads, know a great many. Riddles are more than mere amusement: they serve to quicken the wits. We give a few examples that we have heard around the camp-fires at night.

The student of the language will not fail to notice that in the riddles, as in the proverbs, there are many words and phrases that baffle him. Here also we find unusual or archaic words, but there are also words that have no meaning and never, seemingly, had a meaning; they are used simply to mystify. There are also plays on words introduced for the same purpose.

1. *Musune wa Kachikumbwa ngu shilwiyalomwi.*

Kachikumbwa's ox is a one-horned beast.

Answer : *Lukoma*—"A calabash dipper."

The point is the dipper's long stalk used as a handle.

2. *Kazuminina kalonga kwashala isale.*

When the brook dried up the grass (on the bank) was left.

Answer : *Ndinso*—"It is the eye."

The idea is that when the eye goes blind the eyebrows and eyelashes remain as before.

3. *Kafua ka Ntite kwina owatakasola.*

There is nobody who has not tasted the little bone of Ntite.

Answer : *Ndukolo*—"the breast."

There is a play on the words *ka Ntite* ("of a little bird") and *Katiti* ("the dugs").

4. *Mb'uzhokela.*

As you return !

Answer : *Chilungamo*—"Threshold."

The idea is that whenever you return home you find the threshold.

5. *Uso ndamupa matimba takamana.*

I give your father a small cupful of (a certain kind of) porridge and it does not end.

Answer : *Tulo*—"Sleep."

6. *Umwenu mukadi kombe kafula bulele.*

At your home there is a calf that grazes lying down.

Answer : *Mwini*—"A hoe-handle."

7. *Umwenu mukadi okasubila ifu antumba.*

In your house there is a little thing whose stomach is red outside.

Answer : *Insua*—"A calabash churn."

8. *Mupepe wa Shikwidikwikwi tobonwa mainza.*

The feather of Shikwidikwikwi (a bird) is not seen in the rainy season.

Answer : *Kambizhi*—"A whirlwind."

The point is that the name Shikwidikwikwi is applied to the whirlwind, and whirlwinds are not seen during the rains.

9. *Kuunga balanda mwini taunga.*

The things possessed may blow away, the owner does not.

Answer : *Ndulu*—"An ant-heap."

The allusion is to the flying ants.

10. *Ukwa Leza ndachileta chitasakululwa.*

I brought a thing from God that cannot be taken off like clothes.

Answer : *Matwi*—"Ears."

11. *Munzhila ndayana chitaamba.*
In the road I found something that does not speak.
Answer : *Banyama*—"Animals."
12. *Bimbile uvhunikile a mai akwe.*
A hawk that covers up its eggs!
Answer : *Nduludi*—"It's a roof."
13. *Muzovu umina ch'amba mwifu.*
An elephant that swallows something which speaks in its stomach.
Answer : *Ing'anda*—"A house."
14. *Balumbu ninkuti kutena.*
Foreigners that are covered all over.
Answer : *Inyemo*—"Ground-nuts."
15. *Ukwa Leza ndakachileta chanda chitapapuka.*
From God I brought a forked stick which does not split.
Answer : *Chifunzhi*—"Shoulder."
16. *Owakafwa ngu mpampa, umudyezihina ngu mpampa.*
He who dies is *Mpampa* and the heir is also *Mpampa*.
Answer : *Ngongwa*—"A grub."
17. *Owakafwa ngu choye, umudyezihina ngu choye.*
He who died is *Choye* and the heir is also *Choye*.
Answer : *Mbwiya*—"It is a thorn."
18. *Ku mulonga twakwatana o Nkamba.*
At the river I had a wrestle with *Nkamba*.
Answer : *Mbutezhi*—"A slippery place."
Kukamba means to clutch: the man who made the riddle was at the river one day and slipped in the mud; falling, he clutched the ground. Putting it into the form of an enigma to puzzle his hearers, he makes the word *kamba* ("clutch") into a proper name *Nkamba*, and says he had a wrestle with him.
19. *Baambana bami.*
The chiefs are having a dispute.
Answer : *Matende*—"The feet."
20. *Kakalo katazuminini.*
A little spring that never dries up.
Answer : *Ndinango dia umbwa*—"It's a dog's nose."
21. *Mukamwami owakeza kupukwa ndi aba ikadi.*
The wife of a chief who came to have her hair dressed and became a resident.
Answer : *Nditovu*—"It's a leaf."

22. *Ndatenta isokwe mubalo washala.*
I burnt the veld and the crooked stick remained.
Answer : *Ninzhila*—"It's a road."
23. *Mung'anda ya muchembele mulatonkwa ishishi diomwi.*
Into the house of the old man you can only push one firestick.
Answer : *Ndinango*—"It's the nostril."
- i.e.* You can only push one finger at a time into the nostril.
24. *Twamupa, twamunanga.*
We give it to him and then take it away.
Answer : *Inkidi*—"A stamping-block," *i.e.* we put grain in and take it out as meal.
25. *Twakeenda oba ch'ambuka-ambuka.*
We travelled with those who were constantly going off the road.
Answer : *Mubwa*—"A dog."
26. *Obadi awa kutaanzha.*
Those here do not salute.
Answer : *Ninkuku*—"It is fowls."
27. *Kachea okachina tata.*
It is a small thing that choked my father.
Answer : *Tulo*—"Sleep." Cf. No. 5.
The word for "sleep" is a diminutive.
28. *Kaka kalonga menzhi katola kwi ?*
This little river, where does the water go to ?
Answer : *Chibia chidi a mudilo*—"A pot on the fire."
The point is the evaporation of the water in the pot.
29. *Muzovu tanwi u mukalo.*
The elephant does not drink from a spring.
Answer : *Mbwato*—"It's a canoe."
30. *Twayaya munyama twadya bula, isalo twasowa.*
We killed an animal, ate the inside and threw away the skin.
Answer : *Fulwe*—"A tortoise."
31. *Ndayaya intite, ibanda diezula buloa.*
I killed a little bird and the plain filled with blood.
Answer : *Mudilo*—"Fire."
32. *Bula bwa shiluwe tabukala inzhi.*
The intestine of a leopard is not to be sat upon by a fly.
Answer : *Mudilo*—"Fire."
33. *Ndo wanshia, ndo wanshia.*
My dear, you leave me ! My dear, you leave me !
Answer : *Matende*—"Feet."

34. *Bachungwe bakala isamo diomwi.*
The fish-eagles that sit on one tree.
Answer : *Matwi*—"The ears."
35. *Umwesu mung'anda mukadi kaumbo katavhumukulwa.*
At our home there is a little receptacle that is not to be uncovered.
Answer : *Chilendi*—"A grave."
36. *Kachea kadindi kezwile bulengwa Leza.*
The hole is small that is full of God's creation.
Answer : *Maila*—"Grain."
37. *Machela ataandana.*
Bellows-spouts which do not separate.
Answer : *Izuba o mwezhi*—"The sun and moon."
38. *Mbwakalukankila.*
How he ran away !
Answer : *Kabwenga*—"A hyena."
39. *Ni kuluma tokusha.*
Although it bites you, you can't get rid of it.
Answer : *Mutwi*—"The head."
40. *Ku kuya ndachiyana, ku kuzhoka shichiyene.*
Going I found it, returning I found it not.
Answer : *Mume*—"The dew."
41. *Kulampha nku baanzhika insazhi Bambala.*
It is high that the Bambala hang up their pots of fat.
Answer : *Mangvhuma*—"Fruit of the palm."
42. *Kabwe ka lubanza tokakonzha kukapapula.*
A little stone in the courtyard which you cannot pull up with two hands.
Answer : *Mukofu*—"A scar."
43. *Bana ba Mala balamba chilambo chomwi.*
People of Mala who all whiten themselves in one way.
Answer : *Bachikwangala*—"White-breasted crows."
44. *Chakolela mushinze chiloba.*
The old thing endured the dark seven days.
Answer : *Inkidi*—"A stamping-block."
45. *Ndadima munda kutebula mwitashi.*
I cultivated a field and the harvest was in my hand.
Answer : *Masusu*—"The hair."
46. *Ulaamba zwanga chikutu udi umwini.*
The old dry thing talked tumultuously all by itself.
Answer : *Ndisamo*—"It's a tree."

47. *Ndawala mwitala.*

Something I threw over to the other side of the river.

Answer: *Menso*—"Eyes."

The following are examples of another kind of riddle, in which the answer is given not in a word but in a phrase.

48. *Mbu bakaila.*

Answer: *Obafwa tabazhoka.*

Since they went away! The dead do not return!

49. *Kwa lampa!*

Answer: *Okwa Leza nkule!*

It is far! And it's a long way to God!

Finally we may notice a series of riddles that are more than riddles. The enigma propounded is the same all the way through; the answer takes different forms. They are a kind of catechism challenging the self-complacency of men who think they know everything. They seem like a weak echo of some passages in the Book of Job—"Knowest thou . . . ? Canst thou . . . ?"¹

Nudi mwelwe—"You who are so clever!"

Mu chivhuna cha mbwila tozuba mo!

"You can't hide away under a bean plant!"

Nudi mwelwe—"You who are so clever!"

Ing'ombe ya kwenu divhwelene mukupa toiboni!

"When the milk of your cows is put together you can't tell which is which!"

Nudi mwelwe!—"You who are so clever!"

Ing'ombe sha kwenu disangana ing'ombe ya beni toizhiba!

"When your cow is mixed up with a stranger's herd you can't distinguish it!"

Nudi mwelwe!—"You who are so clever!"

Ansonga sha masumo tokala o.

"You can't sit on the point of a spear."

Nudi mwelwe!—"You who are so clever!"

Mwenzhi toanga mwavhu!

"You can't tie water in a lump!"

Nudi mwelwe!—"You who are so clever!"

Menzhi ulaanga o musantu?

"And can you tie water up in a bundle?"

¹ We do not mean, of course, that they are copied from the Book of Job. They are indigenous sayings.

Nudi mwelwe !—“ You who are so clever ! ”

No mai a nkuku ulabona mudiango ?

“ Can you make out the doorway of a fowl’s egg ? ”

Nudi mwelwe !—“ You who are so clever ! ”

No muntu umishi ulamubona ati wedia udimishi ?

“ In the early days can you tell that a woman is pregnant ? ”

Nudi mwelwe !—“ You who are so clever ! ”

Mishu ya nkuku wakebona ?

“ Did you ever see a fowl’s urine ? ”

Noba mwelwe !—“ You who have grown so clever ! ”

Sa mukaintu ulamwizhiba ati udimishi mulombwana na mukaintu ?

“ Can you tell whether the woman is pregnant of a male or female ? ”

Noba mwelwe !—“ You who have grown so clever ! ”

Mai ulezhiba ati ledi iyi mukombwe na inseke ?

“ And as for eggs, do you know whether this egg is a cock or a hen ? ”

Noba mwelwe !—“ You who have grown so clever ! ”

Sa inzhila ulakeenzha nj’iela ?

“ Can you follow up a road to where it ends ? ”

Noba mwelwe !—“ You who have grown so clever ! ”

Sa lufu lwako ulaluzhiba ati uzona ndafwa ?

“ As for your own death, do you know whether you will die to-morrow ? ”

Noba mwelwe !—“ You who have grown so clever ! ”

Sa chingvhule ulachikwata ?

“ Can you catch hold of a shadow ? ”

Noba mwelwe !—“ You who have grown so clever ! ”

Sa chilonda chidi kunuma ulachitulula buti ?

“ If you have an abscess on your back, can you lance it yourself ? ”

Noba mwelwe !—“ You who have grown so clever ! ”

Mubiabe sa ulamubwezha mwifu ati abote ?

“ Can you put an ugly person back into the womb to be reborn handsome ? ”

3. CONUNDRUMS

Besides their ordinary folk-tales, which are dealt with in the next chapter, the Ba-ila have stories which take the form of conundrums or problems. We have only got

three examples of these. Their likeness to familiar problems in our own tongue is evident, especially the third one, but they seem to be genuinely native productions and not borrowed from Europeans.¹

1. A certain man had five children, four sons and a daughter. He died, leaving his widow and the five children. Some time afterwards the daughter was missing, and nobody could make out what had become of her.

The mother called her sons together and set them to finding their sister. They were remarkably gifted men.

The eldest, by reason of his wisdom, was able to see things at a very great distance. On casting his eyes around he discovered his sister fifty miles away in the clutches of a lion.

Consternation! What was to be done? The brothers went off.

One of them, who had the gift of stealing in unseen, made himself invisible and was able to rescue his sister from the lion's claws.

The lion on missing its prey went rampaging about, but the third brother killed it.

Then they took up the girl and carried her home. But she was dead. On reaching home they began to make preparations for the funeral, but the fourth son said, "Wait!" He went off into the forest, got some medicines, and restored her to life.

The mother was overjoyed, and taking a large piece of meat she gave it to her sons, saying: "Eat, my sons. I give it you in gratitude for your cleverness and faithfulness."

But the brothers said: "No, give it to only one of us—the one who did most in giving our sister back to you safe!"

Here is the problem: To whom was she to give the meat? To him who discovered the girl first at a great distance; to him who rescued her from the lion; to him who killed the lion; or to him who restored her to life? Each seems dependent upon the others. Who got the meat?

Natives argue long and excitedly about this, but nobody has ever yet determined the question. It is said that once they took the problem to Lewanika and it was argued in the khotla at Lealui, but even he was baffled.

2. A man and his wife went to visit their friends. On their return homewards they were accompanied by their respective mothers. On the road, the four were set upon by all manner of horrible creatures—lions, snakes, leopards, etc. etc. They managed to elude them and got to a river.

¹ Since writing these down we have read two similar ones in *Congo Life and Folklore*, by Rev. J. H. Weeks, pp. 43, 122.

There they found a canoe, but to their horror it would only hold three people. Their enemies were pressing hard upon their trail. The river was full of crocodiles ; they couldn't hope to swim. Only three could escape. One must die ! Who was it to be ?

The man sacrificed his mother-in-law, you say. No ! His wife would not allow him. She would not desert her mother, nor he his : the elders would not forsake their children.

How did they get out of their difficulty ?

The native answer is that they all sat down on the river-bank and died together.

3. A man travelling with a leopard, a rat, a goat, and a basket of corn arrived at a river, and found that the only means of crossing was a very small canoe that would hold only himself and one other thing. He put the leopard into the canoe and started off : but as soon as his back was turned the rat commenced to eat the corn.

" This won't do," said he, " I shall have no corn left."

He went back and took the rat ; but the leopard, now left behind, began to eat the goat.

" This won't do," said he, " I shall have no goat left."

He put back again. But when he came to select his load, he was puzzled. Should he sacrifice the rat or the leopard ? No, they were his children, he could not part with them.

What, then, did he do ?

The native answer is that he stayed where he was.

1921 Basden Ibo.pdf

515.4
B29
MAA

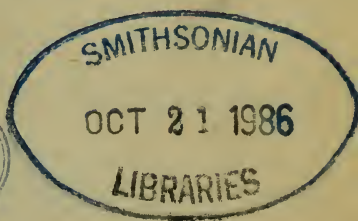
. AMONG THE : IBOS OF NIGERIA

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CURIOUS & INTERESTING
HABITS, CUSTOMS & BELIEFS OF A LITTLE
KNOWN AFRICAN PEOPLE BY ONE WHO HAS
FOR MANY YEARS LIVED AMONGST THEM
: ON CLOSE & INTIMATE TERMS :

BY

G. T. BASDEN, M.A., F.R.G.S.

WITH THIRTY-SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS & A MAP



LONDON
SEELEY, SERVICE & CO. LIMITED
38 GREAT RUSSELL STREET

1921

the Creator decreed that all the other members of the body should for ever be subservient to the Stomach ! The Head should carry its food ; the Eyes must be constantly watching the way it should take ; the Hands were to procure and prepare its food ; and the Feet should carry it whithersoever it chose to go !

The Stomach being very stupid, as many young children are (lit.), pleaded to be allowed to share the troubles of his brethren. The Creator acceded to his request and therefore appointed that his place should be in the forefront of all—a position which exposed him to many dangers.

A note added to the above by the native who originally narrated the legend says, “ Just think of this story ; it practically seems to be true—had it not been a fable.”

The following are a few examples of Proverbs in constant use amongst the Ibo People with whom I am acquainted.

Ufola k'awkpa neyi ! = The cock lays nothing !

Awnwu amagh dike = Death does not recognise strength.

Adebwu dibia makana onye awnazaw nwulu = The doctor is never killed because his patient dies.

Oseaka adewe obele onye = Prodigality never lays hold of one who is little, i.e. the poor have not the wherewithal to be prodigal.

Netinye ego n'akpa, makana adamama = Put money in the bag because one never knows (what may happen). Equivalent to our, “ Put by for a rainy day.”

Kwaw mili k'awdi n'awbwubwa awna maka olue na nkpiliukwu = Bail out the water so that it reach (only) to the ankles, lest it reach the knees. Akin to the English “ A stitch in time saves nine.”

Ncha gbaw, ncha agbaw, echukawm iyi akwa = Whether soap washes or does not am I going to wash clothes ? An expressive way of saying “ I don't care ! ”

Akpanye nwa nkita n'aru awtaka akwa = When you play with a puppy he tears your clothes. This has a similar meaning to "Familiarity breeds contempt." It is used when an adult is treated uncereemoniously by children or servants.

Niri kam za unaw bu awchuchu = Arise that I may sweep the house. This is equivalent to "Your company is no longer acceptable."

Onye lue n'ani anebe nti awbelu nkeya tinye = When one reaches a land where men cut off their ears he cuts off his own. cf. "When in Rome do as Rome does."

Asusu onye adadia ntulu = One's own language is never hard.

Ebe onye bi k'awnawachi = It is the place one lives in that he repairs = "Charity begins at home!"

Enenia nwa ite Awbawnyua awku = A small despised pot will boil over and put out the fire, i.e. a man may be insignificant and yet be overflowing with energy and ability.

Okelekwu amanuma ta akpa dibia ; ma dibia amanuma bu okelekwu awnu = Let not the rat wilfully tear the doctor's bag ; and let not the doctor wilfully curse the rat. The idea is, a child may take certain liberties with his elders but let him not go too far lest he bring punishment upon himself. Likewise let not the elder trifle with the child lest the child turn against him and curse him.

K'awdi nawfu = Let it be so ; that will do. An intensely useful and convenient expression when one has had enough of anything !

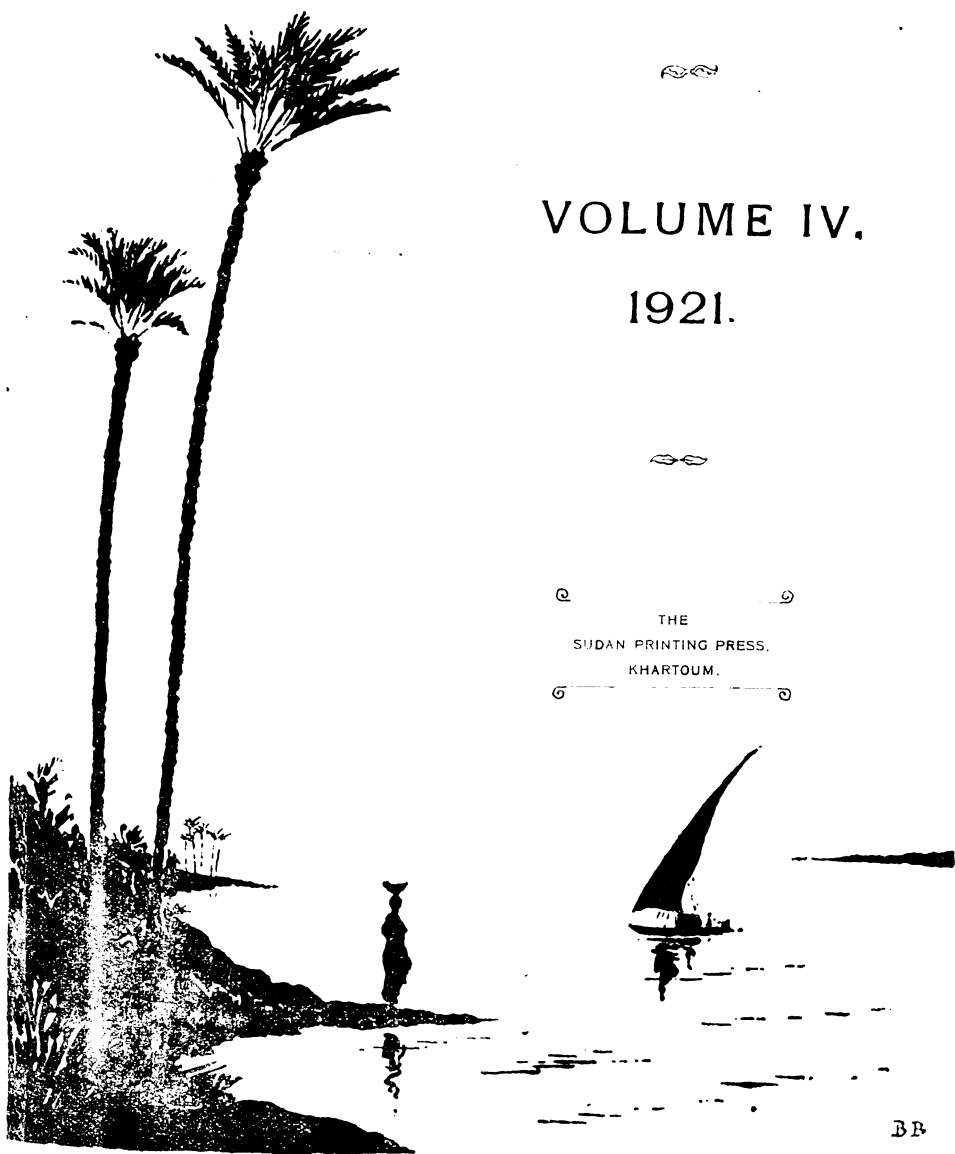
1921 Hillelson Sudan.pdf

SUDAN NOTES AND RECORDS

VOLUME IV.
1921.

THE
SUDAN PRINTING PRESS.
KHARTOUM.

BB



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

ARABIC PROVERBS, SAYINGS, RIDDLES AND POPULAR BELIEFS.

BY S. HILLELSON.

The bulk of the material presented in this paper is derived from a book entitled *al-'Arabiya fil-Sūdān*, the author of which is Sheikh 'Abdullāhi 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Amin, a graduate of the Gordon College and a teacher of Arabic under the Sudan Government Education Department. The main portion of the book, which hitherto remains unpublished, is a glossary of the spoken Arabic of this country viewed with special reference to this connection between the modern dialect and the classical language. A short introduction treats of native beliefs, customs, dress, children's games and other features of every-day life, and each fact is accompanied by references to parallels drawn from the classical literature. The author champions the thesis that the modern inhabitants of the Northern Sudan are of pure Arab descent, and one of the objects of the book is to refute the contrary view which would reduce the Arab influence to a comparatively slight infiltration acting on the aboriginal Nubian stock. It must be admitted that on the cultural side the material collected by the Sheikh does not afford convincing evidence for his thesis: some of the correspondences which he quotes are purely linguistic such as would necessarily occur amongst a population which has adopted the Arabic language together with its metaphors, proverbs and ways of thought; other examples, though truly popular in their present form, ultimately go back to literary sources, while not a few seem to belong to the realm of primitive folklore which transcends all boundaries of race and speech. From our point of view therefore the interest of the material does not consist in its evidential value for any theory of origins, but rather in the illustration it affords of the language, mind and humour of the present-day natives of the Sudan, while the classical parallels are perhaps of some interest inasmuch as they show how customs

and forms of speech surviving to the present day may help towards the interpretation of expressions and allusions occurring in the ancient literature.

Sheikh 'Abdullāhī's manuscript was generously placed at the disposal of the present writer who has made somewhat free use of it. The selection of extracts and the arrangement are his own, the wording of the text has not been closely followed and here and there matter derived from other sources has been introduced. Less stress has been laid on the classical parallels and appropriate subjects have not been excluded on the ground that no corresponding passage from the ancients was available. It has not been possible to verify all the references to classical literature, as the Sheikh does not generally mention his sources, but it appears that he mainly relied on the Qāmūs and al-Maidānī's collection of proverbs. Some of his material is found in a short account of the superstitious ideas and practices of the ancient Arabs. by Ḥamza al-Iṣbahānī, who died between A. D. 961 and 971. This text which was not accessible to the Sheikh has been published by E. Mittwoch in the *Mitteilungen* of the Berlin Seminary of Oriental languages (*Westasiatische Studien* Berlin 1912)

Anyone who is familiar with the attitude of the educated native towards the superstitions and the language of the *'amma*, will appreciate the freedom from prejudice which Sheikh 'Abdullāhī has shown in devoting his time to the study of these subjects. The material he has brought together only touches the surface of a vast subject, but it has the merit of being first-hand information, and thus affords a most interesting contribution towards our knowledge of native custom and dialect. It should be added that the author, who is a native of Tuti Island near Khartoum, is also familiar with other parts of the northern Sudan, especially Kordofan, and that where it has been possible to check his statements, these have been found to be accurate in every respect.

Beliefs and Practices.

A black mark made with antimony (*kuhl*) is put on the face of newborn children to protect them against the evil eye until they are forty days old. A note published in this journal (vol. 2 p. 216) shows that this mark may take the form of a cross and Christian influence is suggested in this connection. The practice itself is pre-islamic and

was known to the ancients under the name of tadsim. A ḥadith relates that the caliph 'Othmān on seeing a handsome child exclaimed *دسموا نوتته*, blacken the dimple on his chin: The dictionaries in which this ḥadith is quoted s. v. *دسم* add that this was done to avert the evil eye. It should be noted that this word, though explained as 'blacken' in this context, originally means "to make greasy". It seems clear however that the commentators responsible for the note in the lexicons were familiar with the custom referred to.

A thread or cord is tied round the waist of small boys, and with the Baggāra this practice is not restricted to boys. Amongst the latter, men women and children wear a thread twisted of the bark of a tree which they call *berīm*. The word *بريم* occurs in the classical language, where it means a thread or string twisted of white and black yarns or a twisted rope in which there are two colours, which a woman binds upon her waist. The ancient Arabs tied round the waist of boys a thread called *ḥiqāb* *حقاب* the object of which was to ward off the evil eye.

When a child's tooth drops out he takes the tooth together with a grain of dura and a piece of coal (1) and throws them towards the sun at the time of his rising exclaiming.

yā 'ein el-shams ukhudī (or addeitak) sinn el-ḥumār wa 'ddīnī sinn el-ghazāl.

Oh eye of the sun take the donkey tooth and give me a gazelle tooth.

This is not done when the sun looks yellow, because in that case the child would get yellow teeth. The same usage is reported of the ancient Arabs by Ḥamza al-Isbahānī no. 20, and the verse of Ṭarafa b. al-'Abd quoted below alludes to the belief that beautiful white teeth are the gift of the sun.

If a traveller in the desert is overtaken by night and does not know where to find a friendly encampment where he might be received hospitably, he imitates the barking of a dog. The idea is that the dogs of any camp in the vicinity will raise their voices in reply and the traveller will be guided by the sound. This practice which is known to all dwellers of the Bādia is referred to in a verse of the poetess Laila al-Akhyaliya, who lived in the first century of Islam.

(1) *Other authorities mention three or seven grains of dura and pieces of coal.*

Many of her poems are devoted to the praise of her dead lover Tauba b. al-Ḥumaiyir and the verse in question runs as follows :

يا توب لمولى وباتوب للندى وباتوب للمستنجح المتنور

Oh Tauba, protector of clients. Tauba the generous, Tauba hospitable to the barker who looks for a light.

When a traveller approaches a strange town it is advisable that before entering it he should bray like an ass. This has the effect of protecting him against any epidemic which may be raging in the place. Sheikh 'Abdullāhī remembers that at the age of ten he travelled from Omdurman to Rufā'a on a boat on which there were a number of men and women, and when Rufā'a came in sight he was urged by his fellow-travellers to bray, they themselves setting the example. Ḥamza al-Iṣbahānī mentions this superstition (loc. cit. no. 14). According to him the braying should be repeated ten times whence the practice is called ta'shīr. He quotes an anecdote about the poet 'Urwa b. al-Ward, who exhibited a laudable scepticism when entering the town of Khaibar, where plague was raging : refusing to follow the example of his companions he improvised the following verse :

لعمري لئن نهقت من خشية الردى نهائى الحمير إننى لجزوع
فلا وأنت تلك النفوس ولا أنت على روضة الأجداد وهي جميع

'By my life, if I were to bray like an ass from fear of death then would I indeed be a coward.

These lives will not escape, nor will they reach Rauḍat al-Ajdād with numbers undiminished.'

After accomplishing their business at Khaibar they turned homewards, but before they had reached Rauḍat al-Ajdād all of them were dead with the exception or 'Urwa.

A man stung by a scorpion or bitten by a snake is decked out in women's ornaments and prevented from going to sleep, the idea being that during sleep the body would offer less resistance to the poison.

Games and dances and music are arranged in order to keep him awake. According to Ḥamza al-Iṣbahānī (no. 25) he must wear the ornaments seven days. The patient is euphemistically called 'salīm'. The poet al-Nābigha alludes to this in the following verse

'يسعد من ليل التام صلبها للحل النساء في يديه قعاقع

'The salīm is kept awake the live-long night while the ornaments of women are jingling on his hands.'

The women of the Sudan apply antimony to their gums and lower lips which are first pricked with needles; the antimony is then applied to the wounds and marks are produced which resemble tattoo marks. This is called dagg el-laghab wal-shallūfa (laghab=gums), and it is practised by all tribes with the exception of the camelowning nomads of Kordofan like the Kabābīsh, the Kawāhla and the Shenābla. Certain tribes on the Blue Nile—the Ḥamada, Juhaina and Shambāta and the Ḍabbāina of the Atbara—have especially elaborate methods and the Baggāra are famed for their skill in the art. References to a similar practice are frequent in the ancient poets. According to Lane, s. v. **التمد**, the women of the Arabs used to sprinkle antimony upon the lips and gums in order that the teeth might glisten the more, and for the same purpose many tattooed their lips so as to make them of a uniform dull bluish colour. The poet Tarafa b. al-ʿAbd says in his Muʿallaqa describing the fore teeth (نفر) of his beloved

سَقَنَهُ إِيَاةُ الشَّمْسِ إِلَّا لَنَاتِهِ أَسْفَ وَلَمْ تَكْدِمِ عَلَيْهِ بِإِثْمِدِ

'The light of the sun has shed its lustre upon them except that the gums are black although she did not prick them with antimony,' and a similar passage occurs in a poem by al-Nābigha of Dhubyān

تَجَلَّو بِفَادِقِي حَمَامَةٍ أَبْكُرَ بَرَدًا أَسْفَ لَنَاتِهِ بِالْإِثْمِدِ

'Between lips black as the tip feathers of a dove of the thicket she displays teeth to the gums of which antimony has been applied.'

A Wednesday at the end of a month or the last Wednesday of a month—arbaḥā wa ʿugāb shahr—is regarded as unlucky all over the Sudan, and no one will begin any undertaking or set out on a journey on that day. This belief can be traced to the ancient Arabs who had a proverb **الثقل من اربعاء لا تدور** 'more burdensome than a Wednesday which does not come round again', where the phrase 'does not come round again' means that it is not followed by another similar day in the month. The origin of this belief may be found in the fact that it was on such a day that divine punishment descended upon the people of ʿĀd, and it lasted until the end of the month. Cp. Qur'an p. 69, verse 5: "and as for ʿĀd they perished with the cold blast of wind, which He subjected against them for seven nights and eight days consecutively".

The commentators say that punishment began on the last Wednesday of the month of Ṣafar ⁽¹⁾.

The people of the Sudan likewise attach an evil significance to the month of Ṣafar which in their dialect is called el-Wiḥeid or Shahr el-ḥarāyig. The latter name (the month of burnings) is due to the belief that during this month the fires of Hell are lit.

Both the ancient Arabs and the modern inhabitants of the Sudan have many stories and sayings in which animals and inanimate objects are introduced as gifted with speech. According to the Sudanese the donkey says 'khamla khamla wa lā meshi fil-ramla; Gently, gently and no walking in the sand'. They relate that the dog originally had no tongue, but stole it from the crocodile by means of trick, therefore when a dog approaches the river they call out 'sid el-lisān jāk. "The owner of the tongue is after you", and the dog runs away. Ḥamza al-lṣbahānī, no. 1—7, quotes a number of folk-lore stories of the ancient Arabs which are very similar in character.

Proverbs.

A collection of Sudan Arabic proverbs was contributed by Mr. H. C. Jackson to the second volume of this journal (p. 105 ff.). The proverbs given in the following pages do not occur in Mr. Jackson's collection; most of them are taken from Sheikh 'Abdul-lāhī's book, where they are quoted with the object of illustrating their correspondence with the proverbs of ancient Arabia. A certain number of sayings derived from other sources have been added; these will be known from the rest by the fact that no classical parallel is quoted.

El-latīm mā bi'allimō el-bikā. Cl. Ar. لا تعلم اليتيم البكاء

There is no need to teach an orphan how to weep.

(1) *I have consulted several commentaries on this passage, and it does not appear that the opinion quoted by the Sheikh was generally held. In the Commentary of Ibn Ḥayān (ed. Cairo A. H. 1328, p. 321) it is stated that the punishment occurred during the last days of the month of Shawāl (not Ṣafar); it began on a Wednesday and it ended on a Wednesday which was the last day of the month. I have heard it stated that it was on a last Wednesday of Ṣafar that Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned.*

El-kelib berīd khangō. Cl. Ar. احب اهل الكلب الية خانقة

Strangle your ~~dog~~ and he will love you.

Rigaiyig u zādō moiya. Cl. Ar. نأطة مدنت بها

They poured more water on the wet ground.

El-ḍayig 'addat el-dābi ikhāf min majarr el-ḥabil. He who has been stung by a serpent is afraid of a rope dragged along the ground. Cl. Ar. من نهشته الحية حذر الرسن الابلق. He who has been stung by a serpent is on his guard against a streaked camel halter. Cp. the verse of the poet

إن السبع ظائف متوجس يخشى ويهرب كل حبل أبلق

'Verily he who has been stung is afraid and on his guard fearing and dreading every streaked rope'.

Kelām el-gisayir mā binsama', The speech of the short man is not listened to. Cl. Ar. لا يطاع لقصير امرة. The obvious meaning of the proverb is that a man of insignificant presence is not listened to in the councils of the tribe, but the classical sources relate a story in which the word Qusair is taken as a proper name. According to this tale al-Zabbā, i.e. Zenobia the queen of Tadmor in the Wilderness, desired the blood of Jadhīma b. Malik al-Abrāṣ in vengeance for her father. Hence she invited him to pay her a visit and he was advised by Qusair al-Lakhmi to decline the honour. But disregarding the advice he proceeded to Tadmor to where he was duly slain. Then Qusair made use of these words which became a proverb.

La lai fiho nāga wa lā jemel. Cl. Ar. لا ناقتي في هذا الامر ولا جملي. No camel of mine, male or female, is concerned in this matter. This proverb is used to express the attitude of a Gallio, or the selfish neutrality of a man who refuses to take sides in a quarrel which does not affect his pocket. The origin of the saying goes back to pre-islamic history. When the war of Basūs broke out between the brother tribes of Bakr and Taghlib a man of Bakr called al-Hārith b. 'Abbad used these words to indicate his intention of taking no part in the quarrel. The words gain point from the fact that the ultimate cause of the war was the slaying of a camel belonging to an old woman called Basūs.

El-kheil igalliban wal-shukur lē Hammād. The horses rout the enemy but Hammād gets the praise. The classical proverb quoted by Sheikh 'Abdullāhī in this place does not appear to give a true parallel. It runs يحمل من و يقضى لكيز. Shann is made to carry while

Lukaiz is let off, 'and refers to a story according to which a mother travelling with her two sons put the burden of mounting her on one of the sons, while the other was excused the duty; whereupon Shann, the aggrieved one, killed her and excused his deed with those words which passed into a proverb.

Idak rabaṭat wa khashmak nafakh. Cl. Ar. يدلك اوتكا وفوك نفخ.

It was your hand which tied and your mouth which blew. The proverb is said of a man who perishes through his own fault; it was originally applied to a man who was drowned while trying to cross a river by means of an inflated skin which was not securely tied.

El-khalā wa lā el-rafiḡ el-fasil. Cl. Ar. الوحدة خير من جليس السوء

Better to be alone than to associate with bad company.

Darabnī baka sabagnī shaka. Cl. Ar. يشجني ويكي

He struck me and wept, then he got his complaint in first.

'Allamnāhum el-shaḥḍa sabagōna 'ala l-biyūt. We taught them the trade of beggary and they got to the hosedoors before us. This is somewhat reminiscent of the well-known verse ascribed to a pre-islamic poet

أَعَلِمْتُ الرِّمَاءَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ وَلَمْ أَشْتَدَّ سَاعِدُهُ رَمَانِي

Every day I taught him skill in archery, and when his arm waxed strong he shot me.

Wadd el-'Arab daulatō (or mulkō) yōm 'irsō wa yōm ṭahūrō. The son of the Arabs is king on the day of his wedding and the day of his circumcision. Cl. Ar. كاد العروس يكون ملعاً.

During the festivities of a circumcision and a wedding the hero of the occasion is compared to a king and shown every respect and deference. The friend fulfilling the function of Best Man is called his wazir and the band of young men attending him are compared to a guard of honour. Modern commentators see in the biblical Song of Songs a collection of verses sung at the wedding of a Hebrew peasant, and the references to King Solomon in his glory are interpreted in the light of the Arab or Oriental idea which is expressed in our proverb.

El-khawwāf 'aṣātō ṭawīla. Cl. Ar. عصا الجبان اطول

The coward uses a long stick.

El-timsāḥ ṭirō fī baḥrō galla'. They mentioned the crocodile and behold it appeared in its river. Al-Maidāni relates that 'Abdallah b. Zubair, the Medinite pretender to the caliphate during the Ummaiyad

dynasty, was one day asking for news of al-Mukhtār, the wellknown partisan of the 'Alids, whom he then believed to be at Mecca. But while he was still speaking al-Mukhtār suddenly appeared and 'Abdallah exclaimed in the words of the proverb : *ادرك غائباً يقترب*

Mention an absent one and he draws near.

Zeitun fi baṭun beitun. Their oil is in the recesses of their house, i.e. they keep it for their own use instead of expending it in hospitality. The classical parallel is *سمنكم هريق في اديمكم*

Their butter is poured on their own bread. (مادوم — اديم 'seasoned bread'). This proverb is made use of in the following verse in which the people of Baghdad are stigmatised for their niggardly hospitality.

ترحل فإ بغداد دار اقامة ولا عند من أسمى يبغداد طائل
عمل أناس ممنهم في أديهم وكلهم من حلية المجد عاطل
ولا غرو أن شلت يد المجد والاعلا وقل سماح من رجال ونائل

Depart-hence, for Baghdad is not a place to abide in, and he who spends his night there gains no profit.

A place of people whose butter is poured on their own bread and all of them are bereft of the jewels of praise.

No wonder that the hand of praise and nobility withers there, since scarce among them is one who gives and one who receives.

Mā ya'rif el-ḥau min el-lau. He does not know right from wrong or true from false. The precise signification of 'ḥau' and 'lau' is doubtful some interpreting it as 'yes' and 'no' and others as 'urging forward' and 'stopping' a camel. The classical form of this phrase is almost identical with the colloquial version given here.

Raja'at Ḥalima lē-gadīma. Ḥalima has returned to her old ways. This is said for example of a man who has acquired sudden wealth and soon afterwards finds himself poor again, or of a backslider who has promised to mend his ways, but relapses into his old habits.

The classical proverb is *مادت لعترها لميس*

— Lamīs has returned to her old habits.

Awarrik nujūm el-gāyila Cl. Ar. *لاريدك الكواكب ظهرا*

— I will show you the stars at midday.

Akkān zōlein galu lak rāsak māfi almis. If two people tell you your head has disappeared, touch to find out.

El-zōl shin dakhal bein el-baṣala wa girfata shin beshumm bara

'afnata. If a man gets between an onion and its skin what will he smell but its stench ?

El-'adū mā bibga ṣaliḥ wal-ḥanḍal mā bibga battikh. An enemy will no more become a friend than colocynth will turn into water-melon.

El-Baṭḥānī shin sallam 'aleik 'idd aṣāba'ik. When a Baṭḥānī has shaken hands with you count your fingers. The point is that the Baṭḥānī are notorious as skilful thieves.

El-moiya mā bitrōb wal-fajira mā bittūb. A harlot will mend her ways when water curdles like milk.

El-tōr shin waga' kataran sakakīn. When the bull is down there are plenty of knives.

Riddles.

The asking of riddles or conundrums is a favourite form of amusement not only confined to children. A number of specimens of this somewhat feeble form of wit, partly derived from Sheikh 'Abdullāhī's book and partly from other sources, have been included in the present paper, though here the question of classical parallels does not arise. The Sudan-Arabic word for a riddle is ḥujwa, pl. ḥijā, and the same word is applied to folk-lore stories or fairy tales. Before asking a riddle an opening formula is used : ḥajeitak mā bajeitak, the answer to which is : kheir Allāh (or kheiran) jān wa jāk. The first word of this formula appears to be a denominative verb derived from ḥujwa while bajeitak is a nonsense word introduced to complete the jingle. The 'an' of kheiran corresponds to the tanwīn of the classical language which the colloquial retains in a certain number of phrases.; jān is a shortened form of jāna جانا

Dakhal el-gashsh mā gal kashsh. It goes into the grass without a rustling sound. The shadow.

Hūwa ṭawīl mā bilḥag el-ka'kōl. It is long but does not reach the piece of gum up on the tree. The road.

Mekkein fī kakar akkān dā ghāb dāk ḥaḍar. Two kings on a throne, when one is absent the other is present. The sun and the moon. Cp. S. N. R. vol. 2 p. 106.

Maṭmūrt Abu Zeid malāna beid. The grain pit of Abu Zeid full of eggs. The mouth and the teeth.

Şoṭ el-melik waga' mīn beshīlo. The king's whip has fallen down, who will pick it up? A snake.

Hajar ḥujanjara ḥujāra lā, Tamshī be arba'āta, el-ḥumāra lā tafgis tebaiyīḍ el-jidāda lā. A stone-like stone but not a stone, it walks on all fours but is not a donkey, it lays eggs and pecks the shell but is not a hen. The crocodile.

Murkab kebīra 'askar ketīra Ḥasan el-ṣighaiyir yeḍauwī l-fatīla. A large boat and many soldiers. Little Ḥasan lights the lamp. The sky, the stars and the moon.

Ana shāyil ahālī inta shin biddūr? I am going home, what do you want? The words of a man to his shadow.

'Indī talāt bagarāt wāḥda akalat mā shaba'at wāḥda ragadat mā gāmat u wāḥda saraḥat mā saḍarat. I have three cows, one eats and is not satisfied, one lies down and does not get up, one goes to graze and does not come back. Fire, ashes and smoke.

'Atūdi wa el-ḥarām ḍabaḥtō el-leila bākīr gām. My little goat, confound him, to-day I kill him and to-morrow he is up again.

Gum on a tree which grows again after being picked.

Bint el-mek fī tāga wa dumū'a nattāga. A princess in a niche and her tears are streaming down. A candle.

Hūwa gadr gurṣ el-ragīf ishūfō el hina wal fil-rīf. It is the size of a loaf of bread, but it can be seen by a person here and one up country. The moon. ✓

2-18-24.
Sh. L.

1921 Ruskin Mongo.pdf

**MONGO
PROVERBS
AND
FABLES**

**COLLECTED AND COMPILED
BY
E. A. RUSKIN**

**BONGANDANGA
CONGO BALOLO MISSION PRESS
CONGO BELGE**

—
1921

“A wise man will hear, and will increase learning;
and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise
counsels: to understand a proverb, and the interpretation:
the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.”

Solomon.

NSAO YA LOMONGO

1 Otomb'isungi, ocik'ifo.

You carry the burning stick, but leave the tinder. (a material which is taken on a journey for producing fire by friction).

Punctilious about the lesser, and neglectful about the greater.

Careful about non-essentials, and careless about essentials.

2 Bonenge okoikyaki la nzala, nda lisala, ntokote.

The *bonenge* (a large forest fruit tree) which saved you from starvation in time of famine, when clearing your garden, do not fell it.

One good turn deserves another.

3 Ntakundak'inkuni okoka'okoli.

You do not strike a child who gives you a piece of creeper (used as string)—and thus assists you.

It is bad policy to ill-use your assistants.

4 Bolemo lofoso, okamba la we afea.

Much noisy talking in the work, the one working with you does not know his part.

5 Ikendo tokiki, jonge j'ambi.

Brisk firm walking (with the noise "*ki ki*"), the body is there.

A simile of good health.

6 Ecim'eki nyango owak'a njwa, wuta nk'eko ?

The pond in which your mother was killed by a snake, do you return there ?

Profit by the experience of others.

"Avoid the ford in which your friend was drowned."

"Que de gens que l'expérience avertit sans les corriger."

How many people (there are) that experience warns without correcting them.

7 Loembele ntokaka nkang'oonju isei.

A mosquito feels no pity for an emaciated person.

An oppressor has no pity for the poor.

8 Ecuka ntemalaka nd'oonga lak'ite.

The ants nest cannot stand in the elephants' track without the support of a bush to which it adheres.

Support is necessary in dangerous places.

9 Okund'ond'iki'ofala nganza.

You strike the person who is holding the antelope with a stick.

Instead of killing the antelope, you strike the person who is holding it for you, and he lets it escape.

You spoil your chance by offending your benefactor.

10 Mbwa ntainelaka ofa nkolo, ainela nkolo ekae.

A dog does not fawn upon a person who is not its master, it fawns upon its master.

Even a dog knows its benefactor.

11 Ifaka nteaka nkolo.

A knife does not know its master (it will cut him as readily as it will anyone else.)

12 Bona oki'okala nk'akwela tsa ; ok'afeka oek'ekela.

The first child fell on the fire (and died); for the next one you make a fire screen to protect it.

Experience teaches wisdom.

A fence at the top of the cliff is better than an ambulance at the bottom.

"It is useless to lock the stable door after the steed is stolen."

13 Bote nk'asi ntacweka nkasa.

A tree without sap does not bear leaves.

A sapless tree is a leafless tree.

14 Ntetaka mbwa 'sila', l'oambo a lo.

It is useless to call a dog to come to you while you have a stick in your hand.

No one is attracted to a person who is in a fighting attitude.

"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly."

15 Bacwaka likila ntabutaka la mbela.

Those who go to the grave do not return by calling.

"Ni largesses, ni pleurs ne reveillent les morts."

Neither bounty, nor tears awaken the dead.

16 Namba ntalembwaka wembo'okae.

An elephant does not become weary of its trunk.

"Charge utile devient legere."

A useful burden becomes light.

17 Ntasesaka namba ikunga ng'ofala.

A dead elephant cannot be cut up with the same secrecy as the antelope can.

Little things may be hidden, great things cannot be.

18 Ntafendaka ntando la mposa e'ola.

A longing for home cannot take you over the river.
Assistance, means, and instruments are indispensable.

19 Botema ekolo, likata engulu, wolelaka befambe bi'anto; we ntokafaka.

Your stomach is a basket, your hand a closed fist,
you cry for other peoples' food; but you do not give away anything.

A reproof to the stingy.

Nothing gets into the closed fist: "Nor out of it,"
said the scrub.

20 Bosulu ntacwaka ntuta.

A vicious treacherous person does not go away
never to return.

He will return "like a bad penny."

21 Engambe nk'ondoomba.

An old man has no one to care for him.

An aged person is not wanted.

22 Boseka nk'ifofi l'omwa.

Friendship only when a morsel (of food) is in the
mouth.

Friendship for the sake of gain—cupboard love.

23 Ntasombaka wato wini.

It is imprudent to buy a canoe which is submerged.
Don't buy a "pig in a poke."

24 Ondoka mpoke isei nk'osombe.

The only one who feels pity for the pot (which
someone has broken) is the one who bought it.

25 Ondoka mpoke isel nk'onema, or okengaki.

The only one who feels pity for the pot is the one who made it.

26 Ekelanto ntakelak'ont'omoko.

A doer (of evil deeds) to people does not behave thus to one person only.

"He that can deceive in one matter can deceive in many." (Norse)

27 Oongola eciki ea nkoi, ekemba nkola, ekoute.

You nourish an orphan leopard; when his claws become strong he springs upon you.

"Nourish a wolf in the winter that he may devour you in the summer." Greek.

Evil for good.

28 Tambyake iangu—batafoyokokita.

Don't stop running—they have not yet laid hold of you.

"Don't die till death comes." Indian.

29 Ntabezaka nyango l'onto.

A mother is not to be compared with another person—she is incomparable.

"A mother is a mother still

The holiest thing alive." Coleridge.

30 Bokolongo w'osongo ! wengela, nko joko.

What a splendid sugar cane ! examine it, it is full of holes.

"Ne jugeons pas toujours sur un dehors trompeur."

Judge not always by the outside (you may be) deceived.

"Things are not what they seem."

31 Lolanga j'ona lim'ele nyango.

Love for a child is from the mother.

32 Ise akolanga nk'aiki nyango.

Your father only loves you while your mother is living.

33 Jefa ntalikyeka likinda.

The sun does not rise once only.

There may be another chance.

34 Bakoliela, wena, otungama—bosa wae?

They came upon you, and you saw (them), now you are bound—why the groanings?

“He who will not take advice, gets knowledge when trouble overtakes him.”

35 Nganza eom'iylo loambi wande eom'iylo lokekele.

The same stick with which they kill a deaf lizard they also kill a large monitor lizard.

A simile of death which shews no favour.

36 Okenza liswa, wokoza bonkoma lae?

You disposed of the axe, why listen for the sound of it chopping?

A reproof to those who regret having given a present.

37 (1) Bengozaka lolaka, ntabengozaka elongi.

38 (2) or Ntabengoza elongi, ondengoz'iylo wae lolaka.

39 (3) or Ntabonyolak'elongi, bonyolaka nk'aoyi.

(1) They change the voice, they do not change the face.

(2) They change not the face, they change the voice.

(3) They cannot turn the face round (to the back of the head), they can change (their) conduct.

Reformation and degeneration are possible, a change of physignomy is not.

40 Bon'owa mpo ntofelak'ilenge.

The young rat does not forget the grass. (its birthplace and home.)

"Every cricket knows its own hearth." Russian

41 Esi ntasilaka l'iangi.

Distance is not diminished by speed.

42 Iwa ntalangemaka.

Death is not to be desired.

43 Bie, bie, la bu, ntalenak'esi.

Bie bie the noise made by a wild beast treading on dry leaves or dead twigs while stalking its prey.

Bu, (from *buta* to spring upon) the noise caused by the beast springing upon its victim.

The noise caused by stalking is not remote from the noise caused by springing upon the victim.

A warning to pay heed to ominous signs.

"And coming events cast their shadows before."
Campbell.

44 Tolena ngoki nta l'okeli.

We separate like the goat and the stream.

A goat may drink water in the village; but is never found drinking in a stream.

Absolute separation.

45 Bona owa wanya, lilako limoko.

An intelligent child, needs but one lesson.

46 Ntalembwak'ecuku lilako.

They do not stop (tire of) teaching a foolish person.

47 Ifulu ntafondaka nd'aliko, ifondaka nd'ase.

A bird does not decompose in the air, it decomposes on the ground.

A person may go far and stay long, but he will ultimately reach his destiny.

48 Mpamb'emoko ntasangolaka bokoka.

A fallen tree cannot be raised by the strength of one person.

49 Ntakendaka la nkang'osulu boseka.

It is not good policy to cultivate the friendship of a vicious treacherous person.

Take care what friendships you form; for "evil company doth corrupt good manners."

"Voulez vous rester bons? Fuyez, fuyez les mauvais compagnons."

Will you remain good? Flee from, flee from bad companions.

50 Ntabemelak'esasa, bemelaka nk'ola.

People are not enraptured with a temporary fishing encampment, they are only enraptured with home.

51 Itoko ik'iy'otongelaka ecumbi baokund'okolongo.

The mat which was made for the burial of an invalid was used for burying the corpse of a strong person (who pre-deceased the invalid).

A reminder of the uncertainty of life.

52 Ntabaunaka etumba l'oala wa likonga, komba la ngua; nyango ofoyolotala.

They do not fight in battle with a spear shaft only, cover yourself with a shield; lest you be wounded.

To go to war inadequately armed is to court defeat.

Cf. Ephesians 6. 11.

53 Ompampa, la wafi a jala?

Nothing, or the (little food) which is on the embers?

"Half a loaf is better than no bread."

"On est plus malheureux sans pieds que sans chaussure."

One is more unfortunate without feet than without shoes.

54 Otutsi l'okunga (or l'okunza, or la bonto owa nganji) aonga ; nsombi lak'olo.

He who is near a generous rich man is well circumstanced ; for he finds it easy to borrow.

When you have the patronage of one able and willing to help, there is no difficulty in securing what you need.

55 Bombito ntenaka lilenga likae.

The African cobra does not see its white spot (which is under its neck).

A self-righteous person does not see himself as others do.

56 Bona aokwela tsa, ofonga ntange nd'afeka.

After the child has fallen on the fire, you repair the bed.

Wise after the event.

"When the house is burnt it is too late to throw water on the cinders." (Danish).

57 Olit'asi nd'ifole.

You are curing water in a basket.

You are engaged on a fruitless task.

58 Okoya we, oya ende.

Be kind to him who is kind to you.

"One good turn deserves another."

59 Ondiyak'ofambe nt'ambyaka loangana.

He who stole the food does not cease denying the theft.

60 Ntawea lisala ! ko ntawea likota ! ! Ondea we nko lila (or ndala.)

You know not how to work ! you know not how to fell trees ! ! You only know how to eat.

A reproof to the lazy.

61 Ndec'a nkangi, oten'ekoka lae ?

I am down with sickness, why cut sticks for carrying me to my burial ?

A reproof to those who desire your death.

62 Engamb'ek'etumba ntafikaka.

A great warrior does not honour himself ; i.e. does not presume upon his past prowess.

63 Etumb'ek'olongo efoune la jelo.

A battle in the street must not be fought half-heartedly.

A great undertaking requires whole-hearted endeavour.

64 Nko liongo, lokolo ntatunama.

But for the knee, the leg could not bend.

Cf. 1 Cor. 12. 22, 27.

65 Mposa e'asi ntaongaka mmeela.

Thirst cannot be quenched by proxy.

Cf. Psalm. 49. 7.

66 Onenaki ntambyaka lisula.

The one who saw (the animal go into the hole) ceases not to poke a stick into the hole (in order to drive it into a net). Cf. Acts 4. 20.

67 Mbaala nko mbimbi.

Gazing does not satisfy with food.

68 Mpafala nko mbimbi.

Waiting does not satisfy with food.

69 Ntaleke litaya l'ombocw'atoi.

You cannot share your meal with one who has gone to earth; i.e. one who is dead.

70 Liate lifa l'ofombo ntakitaka lomela mboleko.

A guileless snake (slime thrower) will not live to swallow an antelope; i.e. it will not reach maturity: but will soon be killed.

The cunning snake hides, and thus evades those who might kill it.

This illustration may be used when wise strategy is required.

71 Bolo boka lingwele nko nd'eonga.

The strength of the wood-peckers is only on the dead tree.

Said of a bully who fears one of his own age, but does not hesitate to strike one younger and weaker than himself.

72 Ntacumyak'eto nkasa.

Do not shew caterpillars leaves—their own food.

To induce an evil-doer to commit further evil is bad policy.

73 Nkang'itatuka nteanaka engambe.

A beautiful person is not known to be an elder; i.e. does not shew age.

74 Likonga nk'aki bemende.

The spear stuck in the ground where the antelope had been.

A missed opportunity.

75 Bonolu ntayaka ntafeza lotomo.

A child does not continue without sometimes refusing to go on an errand.

A child is not always obedient.

76 W'eci a mboka, lokai nga w'okita.

You sleep on the road, and dreaming, think you have reached your destination.

Said of a deluded person.

77 Bofaya nteak'ekundi e'asi nk'onto ondolokola.

A stranger knows not where the hidden water is, if no one tells.

Cf. Romans 10. 14.

78 Boseka ntaongaka wil'omoko.

One-sided friendship is not possible.

"Friendship canna aye stand on one side."

79 Imeezo nd'omwa, bofeza nd'otema.

Assent (or confession) in the mouth, refusal in the heart.

"A mouth that prays, a hand that slays." Arabian.

Cf. Luke 6. 46.

80 Liki litoi ooke, wambosambe l'omwa ; liki liso oene, wambosambe l'omwa.

That which the ear has heard, and the eye has seen, it is useless for your mouth to deny.

81 Imola ntondo, tumble tokamba.

Take away the smaller nets, let us spread the stronger ones. (The *ntondo* are hunting nets which small antelopes are caught in: pigs, bucks and large antelopes are caught in the *tokamba* nets.)

Let us nerve ourselves for greater endeavour and better results.

82 Bonto ntaotswaka nk'ise nko nyango.

A person cannot be born without parents.

"How can a plant grow without seed?" Ceylon.

83 Liswa j'isisi umbaka bote w'onene.

A small axe fells a great tree.

Cf. James 3. 5.

84 Tsa ntasanemaka.

Tsa ntaongak'isano.

Fire is not to be played with.

85 Efoti e'ona efolene la nyango.

A clinging child never parts from its mother.

86 Boseka, mbela nk'a wamba.

Friendship, calling only to fight; i.e. You call me only to fight your battles; when you have food you never call me.

A reproof to those who only make a convenience of a friend.

87 Bona asolika tsa ntutelaka.

A child who has been burnt does not return to the fire.

"No wise man strikes twice against the same stone."

88 Ntambaka jit'a nkusa.

You do not go hunting porcupines and collecting bark for making string at the same time.

"No man can serve two masters." Matt. 6. 24.

"If you pursue two hares, both will escape from you." Greece.

89 Esampote alengola bote wa libwa.

The toad (with its warty skin) mocks those who are suffering from '*libwa*' (an incurable warty skin disease) by offering medicine for its cure.

"Physician heal thyself." Luke 4. 23.

"Among wonderful things is a sore-eyed person who is an oculist." Burmah.

90 Nkanga liongi acwa esela.

The prosperous man may become an invalid.

Prosperity may give place to adversity.

91 Mpo ondiya toma, boseka ; boselenketa, ilanga.

The rat which steals food, a friend; the lizard, an enemy.

On friendly terms with a plunderer, at enmity with the harmless.

92 Boseka w'esato ntaongaka.

The friendship of three is not possible.

"Two's company, three's none."

93 Bokolongo w'osongo ntasambaka joko.

A piece of good sugar-cane is not without holes.

Even a good person has his faults and blemishes.

94 Lembola lokiki, tokend'oseka.

Stop frowning, and let us be friends.

95 Eembe emo ntasekak'emo.

One corpse cannot laugh at another.

96 Bomong'ola aikaka !'ofaya.

The host is benefited by the guest.

97 Basal'afe nko nzala.

Two gardens, no hunger.

He who has made provision for the future will not want.

98 Wambokende, bolembo bokofotsi.

Pursue your course, the bird-lime is sticking to you.

or Wambofengola, bolembo bokofotsi.

Continue to avoid it, the bird-lime is sticking to you, i.e. you are as good as caught; your case is hopeless.

99 Lolango ntaongaka bokal'omoko (or wij'omoko.)

Love on one side only is a failure, or is destined to fail.

100 Wengi bonkondo, wengi lileko.

Every deserted village site has a 'lileko' tree growing on it.

A figure of speech used of anything that is universal, e.g. death, etc.

101 Bonto ntayaka ntawa.

A person does not continue for ever without dying. Death comes to all.

102 Likoli ntumbak'eema.

Argument or contradiction cannot overcome a fault.

103 Etuk'eambi l'ite efokwa (or ntakweka.)

An ant's nest which is attached to a bush does not fall.

Supported, therefore safe.

104 Wisa, wena.

He who hides can find.

105 Oyokende, likambo liyokole.

While you pursue your course, the palaver devours you.

106 Lokosu ntaangaka bofifa.

A cough does not fear the great forest.

107 Mbwa end'okuo (or Mbwa eyoku'okuo) endaselaka nkolo likambo.

A dog which wanders about gets its master into trouble.

108 Ntafengolaka nyango eke mongo ole nd'as'okoka.

You will not go round (i.e. go by another road to avoid) your own mother who lives under a fallen tree.

You will not despise your mother, even if she is living in adverse circumstances.

109 Lomoso ntaongaka nda lokolo, loongaka nda lo.

Left-handedness does not pertain to the foot, but only to the hand.

There is a fitness in all things.

110 Bona ntaongaka nsako.

A child cannot be common property.

111 Wembi (or Webi) akofengoza bombilo, ofenz'ende ntando.

If your friend takes you round by another way to avoid a plot of garden on fire, you take him over the river.

"One good turn deserves another."

112 Eciki a ntomo, bona mongo l'efomba.

The orphan goes on errands, whereas the child of the household is provided with a portion of food.

While the child is pampered, the orphan is treated as a drudge.

113 Mpo jombo nd'ase ba ntange.

Others may speak of the rat's hole under the bed as a place of bondage; (but the rat regards it as home).

Notwithstanding what others may say about an abode, it is home to him who lives there.

114 Wane boyaka, wenamaka l'efekele.

When the heat of the sun is great, stand by the stump of a tree (in the shade).

Seek refuge in time of trouble.

115 Ofotumbole palo otoka nzala.

You would not take off a portion of uncooked food from the fire and eat it, unless you were hungry.

Necessity may dictate strange and extreme measures.

116 Bona ntaongaka nsombi.

A child is not loaned or borrowed.

117 Loola ntaongak'okele.

Heaven cannot be reached by means of a 'bokele,' i.e., a creeper hoop which is used for climbing trees.

118 Lomako ntaongaka juka nkongi.

The River Lomako cannot be dammed.

119 Nking'a njoku ntaongak'olefo.

An elephant's neck does not suit a bell (such as is fixed to the neck of a hunting dog, that it may be known when it is chasing an animal).

This and 117 and 118 are used in the same way, and mean, Why attempt the impossible?

120 Ntando nko liyombo, limoci nk'esiko.

The river gives no compensation, earth receives no ransom.

Death by water or land is irrevocable.

121 Wambokende, likambo likolokola.

Pursue your course, the palaver is on your track.

122 Boseka wa mpulu, booto wa nengola.

Feigned friendship is a relationship of mockery.

123 Nyango ea ncikela, befambe benkuma ntekoka.

With a step-mother there is never a sufficiency of food. She only provides for her own.

124 Tosambolake mboka eko, nyango bafokoomba itsa nkokolo.

Don't go by that road, lest they bind up your head in the large leaves (used for cooking).

A warning to avoid something which may lead to your death.

125 Lokusa aofenda mboka—alanga batene nsonge.

The creeper (from which string is made) grows across a path—it desires that they will cut off its head; i.e. it is in quest of death.

A figure of speech used to condemn conduct which will inevitably lead to disaster.

126 Boselenketa bole nsamba, bole nsamba, wasa nk'owa.

The lizard which goes from roof to roof is in quest of death.

127 Botumba bonda liombo bonda wucu l'etongo : baolota botumba wa baoyi'obe.

One house has a good floor, another is dusty and much noise is heard in it; but people flee from the house of evil words or deeds.

Appearance is not always a safe guide—evil deeds may be done in a clean house.

128 Bomongo ntafombaka jonge likae.

A person does not deceive his own body.

129 Bomongo ntalengolaka.

A person does not mock himself.

130 Iango y'okulu—botai bocwaka nk'esembe.

In the beginning, string—the net subsequently becomes a large coil.

Small beginnings may have great endings.

Cf. 187 & 190.

131 Baki'amato baocwa baende.

Those who were women have become men.

The weak have become strong.

132 Baki baende baocwa bamato.

Those who were men have become women.

The strong have become weak.

133 Nkombo eki fafa, "Ompime, mpaolela ;" bofambe ntatongak'i-lombe nda lingongo.

My father's adage was, "Refuse to give it me, I shall not cry;" food does not build a house in the throat.

A reproof to the miserly who give nothing away.

134 Wambene oyayeka, tofelake botooma.

Although now you have plenty, do not forget the masticating of one thing only; i.e. you may have to eat dry bread

In the day of prosperity, remember adversity.
A reproof to the extravagant and selfish.

135 Okund'ona, nyango oka nkele.

Strike a child, and its mother becomes angry.

136 Kitaka nk'ona, wena nyango.

Only lay hold of a child, and you will see its mother.
Cf. 1 Kings. 3.

137 Bokakaza wa mponye, jefa jokya.

The thought of a lazy person is, The sun is risen.
A vain excuse of the slothful. Prov. 22. 13; 26, 13, 14.

138 Ofoyal'oki nkema nd'olenga.

Be not as the monkeys in the *bolenga*.

They remain in the '*bolenga*,' not knowing that the hunters have cut the branches of neighbouring trees: in attempting to escape, they are caught in the net set for them.

Do not live in a "fool's paradise."

139 Toond'esende, bongolo bol'iteko bwo.

We track a squirrel, the '*bongolo*' (a larger animal) springs into the net.

They got something better than that which they sought.

140 Toond'ekute, lina likela nk'asi.

We trace the foot-print of an animal which passed yesterday, and lo! a fresh foot-print of to-day.

Tracing the old foot-print, we come upon a fresh one; we then follow in the foot-prints of an animal which passed but recently, and kill it.

A pleasant surprise.

141 Obok 'elongi nd'okonda lae ?

Why do you turn (cast) your face toward the forest ?
Why do you despise me ?

142 Ofonga bokumb'a ekaka !

You keep '*bokumba*' (a lung disease) in your chest '
i.e. you conceal it.

Concealment is unavailing : for "truth will out."

143 Bosekota ng'okwa.

A young man like salt, i.e. of a good disposition.

144 Bosekoka nga mboyoy.

A young man like the '*mboyoy*' (a very straight tree);
i.e. of fine physique.

145 Ntasanaka la ntao la tsa.

Oil and fire must not be played with simultaneously.

146 Ntatongelaka losao loka nyama boliko.

A '*boliko*', (small elevated platform for curing meat)
is not built for the foot-print of an animal.

"Don't count your chickens before they are
hatched."

147 Wale oki lifofoko !

The bravery of the elephant fly !
It makes a loud buzzing sound like i-i-i-i ! and then
flies away. Much noise, but no courage.

148 Nkema ntakaaka nd'olenga oki wembi.

A monkey does not spring into the trap in which its
mate has been caught.

"Profit by the experience of others."

149 Likongoenga ; jotanela tolufe.

Let it continue to dry ; it is overtaken by heavy rains.

The indolent person says of his garden, "Let it dry a little more," and day by day he puts off burning the undergrowth which he has cut, until the dry season is past; the heavy rains come, and it is too late to burn. And thus he is left without a garden.

Procrastination leads to want.

150 Likinda nteanaka nd'olongo bok'etumba.

An only son is not known in the battle line.

A rebuke to pride. In a battle an only son is of no more importance than any other man.

151 Bokoko bonda ntoela o nga joi ja nsangela.

A piece of peeled sugar-cane is like a thing told you.

No one likes to receive sugar-cane peeled, they prefer to peel it for themselves. And so with hearsay, they prefer to hear and see for themselves.

There is always the possibility of a rumour being contradicted.

152 Besembe beuma ntakokaka mpota.

All the fingers are not equally wounded.

If you have a sore on one finger it does not follow that you have one on every finger.

Do not judge the whole community by one bad member of it—all are not necessarily like him.

153 Ikasa mbaamba, eu nkoamba l'oseka w'ombamba l'aoyi.

A small leaf closely folded, I unite with you in friendship ; you unite with me with words (palavers).

Unrequited friendship—returning evil for good.

154 *Ikoko*, em'okoni, ondekol'eu l'otale lae?

Ikoko, (a very tall plantain) I planted you, why do you surpass me in height?

A simile expressing reproof to a slave or dependent who has been succoured and taught, but has become arrogant towards his helper.

155 *Lilenga limo*, ondolengaka nko limo.

A treacherous person is treacherously dealt with by one of his own kind.

"Set a thief to catch a thief."

156 *Bolemo bokamba we la nyongo*. Okel'okamba, bokamb'ombosi-l'oso (joso).

The work which you and your mother have done. You say you did it, and it was already finished. It was finished so quickly because of her assistance.

Give "honour to whom honour is due."

157 *Esongo aol'ekucu*, ofel'olaka lae?

The snag has broken the calabash, why do you blame the bolaka (a kind of gum used for mending calabashes)? Blame those to whom blame is due.

158 *Lokai afa nteke*.

Thought (mind) is not a gathering for settling affairs.

You may decide a thing according to your own thought, and realise afterwards that you would have done differently, and probably better, if you had had the advice of others.

"Lean not to your own understanding." Prov. 3. 6.

159 *Eu la we tofaolena*, eleng'ele lokumo loling'ote iombe.

I and you will never part, like the lokumo creeper which twists round and round the iombe tree. It cannot be separated from it.

A vow of constant friendship.

160 Lako lisangya, lokendo lofoonge.

Without a definite purpose, a journey is of no use.

161 Batanga webi, osekala tola ; nk'esi, bakotanga we o ngoko.

When they scandalize your friend, you laugh about it ; it will not be long before they scandalize you in the same way.

Presumption may be followed by disillusion.

162 Bomoto aokima nsoso l'oola wa lende.

A woman only chases a fowl when there is no male to do it.

Necessity compels us to help ourselves when in difficulty.

163 Nkaka ea tsa la e'okonda efosongi.

The density of fire and that of the forest are not the same.

164 Wamben'olo, tofelak'obe.

You continue to see good, don't forget evil.

You enjoy prosperity, don't forget adversity.

165 Lokas'iangu o nyama ek'omoto.

A leaf (for wrapping the meat) is quickly brought by a woman, when an animal has been killed of which she partakes.

166 Nsoso efemala la mbula ntaleka yomba y'olo.

A fowl does not stand under cover when it rains, unless it has eaten something good.

167 Eya banto ntaataka bolangi.

He who is hospitable (or kind) to people is himself without a friend.

He treats others well, but is himself disliked.

168 Baondekela ng'ekeng'okwa.

They pass from me like a lump of salt.

When the potash-producing plants are boiled, and the liquid is left to cool, a certain amount of evaporation takes place, and the salt cakes on one side of the pot only.

All are against me, I stand alone.

169 Wuo oki mpete.

A question regarding '*mpete*' (a leaf used for thatching).

A man who is returning from the forest carrying a bundle of *mpete* is met by a person who asks, "O! is that *mpete*?" There is no reason for the question; as it is obvious to all that he is carrying *mpete*.

A reproof to the inquisitive who ask questions for asking's sake.

170 Botutsi'a nkema ondesany'oliko.

The person nearest the monkey is the one to watch the creeper (in which it is hiding). The others go for their nets, and when they return, he is able to shew them its hiding place.

Responsibility.

171 Ntasesaka namb'a nkola.

A dead elephant cannot be cut up with the finger nails.

Implements are indispensable. Cf. 172.

172 Nkema ntawaka ndesanya.

A monkey is not killed by merely watching it.

Weapons are necessary.

You cannot attain the end in view without the use of means. Cf. 171.

173 Bosambelo ntafendaka lisoko.

Hand-shaking does not reach above the shoulder.

Said to a person who is very gushing when shaking hands (or more correctly shaking arms native fashion), and puts his hands on his friend's shoulders.

Feigned friendship.

174 *Keko ndoka lokiyo lofumbwa la mbile !*

Never before have I heard of a flying squirrel springing in the day-time !

The flying squirrel is nocturnal, and is very seldom seen to spring from tree to tree in the day-time. An article has just been missed, and the owner of it makes use of the above exclamation in the hearing of a person who is near to where the article was last seen.

An insinuation made to a suspected thief.

175 *Olika we, isesansinga !*

O you, *isesansinga* ! *Isesansinga* is a rough-edged grass which wounds a person who touches it. The name is formed from the the verb *sesa*, to cut up, and *nsinga*, a kind of fish = *isesansinga*, one who cuts up the *nsinga* fish.

This simile is used of a churlish person who is continually wounding the feelings of others.

176 *Julu life lisekana ifoso.*

Two tortoises laughing at each other's shell. Both are equally hard and ugly.

"The pot calling the kettle black."

177 *Eembe emo esek'emo.*

One stiffened corpse laughing at another.

Same as 176.

178 *Ioko a losi ? Tosuk'ofaya. Nkina iocwa la namba.*

Is the manioca in the spring ? We press the visitor to stay. Perhaps the manioca has been taken by elephants.

Before inviting a visitor to remain, make sure that you have food to set before him.

179 Tofela nkoi, ko tofel'andola nd'anza.

We blame the leopard, and we also blame those who go outside.

It is unwise to go out at night when a leopard is known to be prowling about. If a person goes out and is wounded or killed, he will be judged to have been culpable.

Said of those who have disregarded warning.

180 Ofoyale ng'ok'Iseacumbo nd'ofongo.

Be not like *Iseacumbo* of *Bofongo*.

He refused to take any manioca with him to the hunt, saying that he could get plenty from other people. Instead of getting plenty, he starved.

Make suitable provision for the future.

181 Nzala nteak'isekota.

Hunger does not know youth.

182 Ocwaka nkele aleka jei.

He who goes to the palm plantation eats the 'jei', (best kind of palm nuts).

The labourer is worthy of his hire. Cf. 2 Tim. 2. 6.

183 Bangel'Inkoma, siki Inkoma aang'akand'aoyi.

They conspired against *Inkoma*, but *Inkoma* was making his own plans.

The enemies of *Inkoma* had plotted to slay him, and had him shut up in a hut in readiness. But during the night he set to work, and dug a tunnel, keeping the earth in the hut out of sight. He carried the tunnel outside the enclosure of the hut and escaped by it. In the morning his enemies found him gone.

"There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip."

184 Mbaala ntasizaka nzala.

Gazing (at food) does not appease hunger.

185 Mbaala ntaikyak'onto.

Gazing (at a person) does not heal him.

"A little help is worth a deal of pity."

186 Bonto ale nd'otumba nta ntotswaka.

If a person is in the hut, a goat does not enter.

This proverb may be used as an illustration shewing that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer is a preventive of Satanic domination and of evil from without.

178 Me-me—akitaka nta.

Me-me (bleat of a kid)—it (the kid) becomes a goat.

Little beginnings may have big issues. Cf. Zech. 4. 10.

188 Ilonga nsako nyama y'onto l'onto.

Partnership in the trap, share of the meat.

Cf. I Sam. 30. 24.

189 End'okoka liwa, a faokoka'okala nko lomba?

He who gives you palm-oil pottage, will he not first give you a single palm-nut?

Cf. Rom. 8. 32.

190 Oki bolunga aocwa lonsolo.

That which was a bud has become a *lonsolo* (a ripe vegetable resembling a tomato in appearance).

Cf. 130 & 187.

191 Bakokime la wete lilembw'ompempe?

While they are following you (in chase), do you leave the road only to give up on the edge of it?

Do not give up; get as far out of danger as you can.

192 Paka-paka ntakitak'iboki.

Food given away never reaches a large packet.

This expression may be used as a reminder to a person who is discontented with what he receives as a gift.

"Do not look a gift horse in the mouth." Butler.

193 Onambolak'eciki nk'osangi l'olwa.

The one to adopt an orphan is the person who was related to the deceased parent. (*Bolwa* = one who dies a natural death.)

Responsibility.

194 Ntasinganaka l'elimo nko loela.

One does not choose to live next to an old man from whom there will be no call.

He is too poor to share his food with others.

195 Nteke eki Bongamba.

The assembly of *Bongamba*.

Bongamba was going to a play in which he was to take part; but he took so long in preparing his adornment for it, that he arrived at the place of assembly to find the play ended.

Delay may cause you to miss an opportunity.

196 Nenaki, ncenaki.

I saw, I did not see.

A man returns from the forest and tells stories of impossible things which he says he has seen, such as maize growing in the forest, palm-nuts and plantains growing in the marsh &c. On being closely questioned he has to own, "I did not see it."

A rebuke to those who exaggerate.

197 Iciciki ya nsoso, ilongi nko lominyo.

A little orphan chick always has a sad face. It has no mother to care for it.

198 Ecina ntaongozaka mponye'ona.

An industrious person does not rear a child for a lazy one.

199 Lilelo ntalisizaka likambo.

Crying does not finish a palaver.

200 Engolo ea likambo ntasambaka balimo.

A big affair or palaver does not lack old men (to act as judges at the trial).

201 Bofaya ntetamaka, nk'omong'ola ntosuka.

A guest will not stay for the night, if the host has not pressed him to do so.

202 Obok'ojwela ; eto ea nsasamba etakekela.

You throw away the old cloth (or garment); but the newly-made cloth has not become accustomed to you, i.e. does not fit you.

A new situation may at first be less agreeable than the former.

203 Mboka esimbi we yowa, bekolo bekotomba, nk'okenda.

Along the road on which you are to meet your death, your legs will carry you, and you will go.

Destiny cannot be averted.

204 Bendanga yili (bili) nkasa ifea.

The leaves of the tree do not know the intentions of the roots.

205 Somba mboka, kel'okunde nyango.

Buy the road (i.e. pay toll), then bury your mother.

The native custom was that if the road to a cemetery passed through private property, permission had to be obtained or toll paid before the corpse could be taken to the cemetery.

206 Nsoso e'olongo ntabakimaka la jelo.

They do not chase a fowl of the street half-heartedly.

Said of a task requiring perseverance and strenuous exertion.

207 Nta ntotalak'esongo—ondotala oyokime.

A goat is not wounded by striking its foot against a stick—he who is chasing it is wounded.

208 Osola ntando, ofita nde wita ?

You put poison in the river, do you waste the *wita* ?

Wita is a poisonous fruit which kills fish in small streams only. There is too much water in a river for it to take effect.

Are not your efforts futile?

209 Ima ntafanzak 'ilongo ; ofanzak 'ilongo nk'aoyi'obe.

Miserliness does not scatter your relatives; only evil deeds scatter them.

210 Tosul'ale, lokiyo sengulu.

We poke away in the hole of a *ale* (a species of squirrel), and all the time a flying squirrel, *lokiyo* (a larger animal), is in the tree above us.

211 Webi aolikumwa, wikumwa.

Your friend has run, you run too.

212 Bona owa lisoko ntakendaka nd'otonga wa nsombo.

A young antelope (large species) never mixes with a herd of pigs.

"Birds of a feather flock together."

213 Ntatomaka nsoso lotomo.

A fowl is never sent on an errand.

214 Bont'omoko nk'olo.

One man is no good, i.e., to live in solitude.

215 Okela baoyi'afe.

You are double-minded.

216 Tosombake wato wini.

Don't buy a submerged canoe.

"Never buy a pig in a poke."

217 Bosai bokela mpota, beuma beokoka l'alongo.

One finger has a sore, all the others are covered with blood.

All are affected because of one.

218 Lokendo loongaka la nkesa.

Its best to go on a journey in the morning.

219 Ise aomaki njoku, beke bempate nko ?

Your father killed an elephant, then where are your tusks ?

220 Bolo 'omoko ntaunyak 'etafi.

One man's strength will not break a branch.

221 Esomb'aoka ntaleka yomba ibe.

A salesman does not eat anything inferior.

222 Boya wa likilo nk'ona al'eko.

Your son-in-law shews you kindness only while your daughter remains with him.

223 Nkana ea webi akokaaki o nyama ; ntakotokwel'asi.

The sister or brother of your friend will give you meat, but will not fetch water for you.

224 Nyango ea webi, batoi b'olo.

The mother of your friend is hard of hearing, i.e., she won't help you.

225 Nsoso ntaekaka nsamb'ife.

A cock does not crow on two roofs ; i.e. he crows at home.

226 Bombende ntimbwaka nd'ase b'oteko.

A *bombende* antelope does not sleep beneath a boteko tree, (lest the fruit fall on him).

Keep out of danger.

227 Ekenje ntaluwaka l'ompompo.

A stone is never overturned by the wind.

228 Balambo lokuto atanelak'afaya.

Slow cooking, the visitors arrive before you are ready.

If you procrastinate, you may find no opportunity afterwards.

229 Etumba ea mbotswa (or nsangeli) ntawak'ant'auke.

The attack of which warning was given by one who is related on both sides, does not cause many deaths.

230 Nsoso ntutaka nd'elaji.

A fowl never returns to a deserted village site.

231 Bobe l'olo bafolene ; bayokende nd'ekoka.

Evil and good are not separated ; they go together in a crowd of people.

232 Lituka afa ngola, afoonge nsambela.

Beauty is not cam-wood powder (used for adornment), it cannot be communicated.

233 Ntando ntawaka la nkai.

The river is not killed by paddles ; i.e. it is none the worse for being churned by them.

Scandal does not kill.

234 Elanda l'ekolo ekukola batongi.

He who walks in the evenings discloses back-biters.

235 Lolango ntaongaka nangela.

Love is not possible by proxy.

236 Ima ntafimaka lolango.

A stingy person does not refuse to give to his lover.

237 Bote ntacikak'ecw'aunza.

The tree falls in the same spot as its leaves.

238 Ntabetaka mbwa a mpao efokinela ; betaka mbwa a mpao nk'ekinela.

They do not call a dog to the hunt which does not crouch before you : the dog which they call to the hunt is the one which crouches before you : i.e. if it is unfriendly to you, it will not obey you.

239 Ocwak'okala ntena ndola, oya lim'afeka," Ndola ikau."

The one who went first did not see the *ndola* fruit ; he who comes afterwards (says), "My *ndola*." He saw and claimed them as his own.

A reproof to the unobservant.

240 Esombe lomi, mpao mpolo : tokele mo?

Market to-morrow, nothing killed at the hunt : what shall we do ?

Shall we wait for the market, or go to the hunt again, and chance getting nothing ?

In a dilemma as to which course to pursue. Cf. Phil. 1. 23.

241 Ikasa indutaka aeyoko icwaka lolo ; lolo icwaka ngele ntutaka.

The little leaf which soon returns is the one which goes up-stream ; but that which goes down-stream never returns.

Some things are not beyond recall, but others are irrevocable.

242 Oamb'ik'a nondo ; iko l'elunga, nondo l'enyai, oat'eyalemelo nko?

You join yourself to the porcupine and the electric eel ; the porcupine has quills, the electric eel has electricity, what abiding place have you ?

When sick, you go to your friends, but one like a porcupine turns his quills on you, and another resembling the electric eel gives you a shock,—anything to get rid of you.

Desired by none, you are driven away by all.

243 Elingisela, bonto oyokinde toncinga.

The hearth is the one who is filled with little packets of food.

244 Eciki ea lioko afolel'otonga, alela nk'ikole.

An orphan squirrel does not need a herd ; he only needs a little hole, i.e. a dwelling place.

245 Efeko efofete boeko wae ?

The tool which is not sharp, why make it taboo? i.e. interdict the use of it.

A blunt tool is common property.

246 Likucu liki nguma nd'okonda.

The authority of the python in the forest.

The python is regarded as a chief because he never divides any food with another, he swallows it whole.

Selfishness.

247 Mboloko ntawaka ocik'a ngonda.

An antelope does not die if you leave it in the forest (its home).

Used of a man who does not like company ; but prefers to dwell alone.

248 Ntakomolaka ekolo ea nyango la mbile.

It is imprudent to take anything out of your mother's basket by day, i.e. during day-light.

A thief seeing you may himself steal something from the basket, and then tell some plausible story of your having taken it.

A caution against contingent evil.

249 Ole nda litoi ja mbwa na? Ofa.

What is in the dog's ear? *Ofa* (a large kind of tick which causes deafness).

Used reprovingly to a person who is constantly forgetting what he is told.

"None so deaf as those who won't hear."

250 Bomong'itunda aocukala nd'oelo.

The owner of the mat is sitting on the edge of it.

He who made or bought the mat has scarcely a place to sit on; because others crowd him out.

251 Wato ntakitamaka lolinda nd'iongo.

A canoe frequently sinks in the landing-place.

After a journey, having stemmed strong currents and weathered heavy storms, when those on board think they have reached safety, the canoe sinks just as she is coming into port.

252 Lituka ja weli ntambolaka nteli.

The beauty (brightness) of the moonhine does not pick up a needle.

253 Nganji'afaya.

Presents for strangers.

Used to a person who never gives anything to his own people, but only to visitors or strangers, thus seeking fame abroad.

254 Yoleka l'ankina, bona owa nyango nd'ikasa.

You eat with others; but your own brother or sister receives some food on a small leaf.

Same significance as 253.

255 Osana la licuku j'okoko, ntola la mbindo, ola l'alongo.

You play with a joint of sugar cane; if you do not eat it with the dirt (from your fingers), you will eat it with blood (from a scratch of the *licuku* which is prickly).

256 Likambo ntasambaka ncina.

A palaver is not without a reason.

257 Bokoli ntemelaka lako licina.

A creeper does not grow without a stem (from the root).

A simile expressing the same thought as No 256.

258 Wangana ntawumba linko, ikoko ikel'elembo lae ?

You deny having cut down a bunch of plantains, how is it your knife is smeared with plantain sap?

Circumstantial evidence condemns you.

259 Ise ef'eke afaokosambela likambo ja nkaka.

Your step-father will not settle a difficult palaver for you.

260 Lomi, lifi, w'ifimana o mpolo.

Tomorrow, the day after tomorrow; you will get nothing at all.

Used to procrastinators, who say, "Tomorrow or the next day will do," and frequently lose their opportunity.

261 Bofolu afitaka lokumo etumba nteuna.

The coward destroyed his fame when no attack was made.

Hearing a rumour that an attack was planned, he fled; but subsequently found that it was a false alarm. Henceforth the women called him a woman.

Spoilt reputation.

Proverbs. 28. 1.

262 Nyango ef'ekawe ntakokinzak'ofambe likunju to.

Your step-mother does not satisfy your stomach with food.

263 Likind'a mbula ntaangaka l'onene w'owa.

A solitary shower of rain does not fear the greatness of the dry season.

264 Baleka ntende balembwak'okai.

They who eat *ntende* (acid fruit), get tired of acidity. Satiety.

265 Efala we nta, w'ilela jefa, ojewela mbula.

While you wait for (the gift of) a goat, the sun may set, or you may be caught in the rain.

Used to a young person who is always waiting about for a friend, and getting no good by it.

266 Ntasinganyaka namba l'ongete.

They do not compare an elephant with the smallest kind of antelope.

Incomparable—not parallel cases.

267 Ifikele ntawaka, locike.

The tree stump will not rot because you leave it.

An expression used by the forsaken. "Never mind me, I shall not die yet!"

268 Anini'auta, ntaongaka isano bonyanyato.

Where oil is immersed, it will not do to play *bonyanyato*, a kind of dance.

The oil is hidden under water for its preservation: if you go playing near the hidden pot, you may smash it, and lose the oil.

"On peut payer cher un frivole plaisir"

One may pay dearly for a frivolous pleasure.

269 Onungaki aut'okemb'ondoekole.

He who was lost in the forest practises extortion on the one who rescued him.

"After crossing the river the boatman gets a cuff."

270 Osekela wela tola.

You laugh at your own need, i.e. you are in need yourself and yet laugh at the very thing you lack.

Foolishness—making fun of your own adverse circumstances.

271 Ilelaka nk'anto, afoat'ondolel'ende.

The one who is constantly crying (mourning) for others, has no one to cry for him. Cf. 358 & 359.

272 Imeezo nd'omwa, nsisoza nd'otema.

Assent (or confession) in the mouth, tormenting in the heart.

"A mouth consenting, a heart unrelenting."

273 Nse embowaka ntakendaka.

A dead fish cannot swim (lit. cannot go).

274 Nse ntacikak'ecw'asi.

A fish does not stop going in the direction in which the water flows.

275 Ound'eonga ntaalak'ase.

He who climbs a dead tree does not look down.
Caution.

276 Botoa ntaunaka la nsambo.

Six do not fight with seven.
Unequal contest.

277 Engambe nda mpao ntaki likoli.

An elder in the hunt, no (need for) argument.
When a hunt is being arranged for there is no need to ask, "Will the elder go?" You may always count on him; the young men are the doubtful ones.

278 Inkune asana nda lisafa asanela ise la nyango.

An infant who plays in a puddle, plays for his father and mother, i.e. he will cover them with dirt when they nurse him.
A child may bring trouble on his parents.

279 Oyound'eliko, oyofwa, ntakweka.

He who climbs a creeper, and considers (remembers) does not fall.
In a dangerous situation, exercise discretion.

280 Ta; "Mpotae." Leka; "Mpoleke." Okela we na?

Run into the net; "I will not run into the net."
Pass; "I will not pass." What will you do?
Indecision; used to a person who does not know his own mind.

281 Toyake la mbile; toyake l'otso; nje ekek'eya?

Come not by day; come not by night; at what time shall I come?
A rebuke to the churlish.

282 Nsoso ntaekaka betond'efe.

A cock does not crow on two perches.
A man is master in his own house only; not in that of another.
Used in reproof. Cf. 225.

283 Otumbel'etuka ; ofita nde benoi ?

You set fire to an ant's nest ; are you destroying the small twigs used for lighting fires ?

Etuka will not ignite, why attempt the impossible ?

Misdirected energy of one engaged in a work of inutility.

284 Ofa l'okune, bokilo akofala nd'ifele.

If you have no young brother, your brother-in-law will wait for you at the pit which you have dug for catching animals.

It is unsafe to go alone—a leopard might kill you while you are carrying the animal home.

You may be compelled by necessity to do things which otherwise you would prefer not to do.

285 Ntacwaka ifele l'anko.

You do not take plantains only when you go to dig a pit for catching animals.

Plantains do not keep as well as cassava, and you may be away from home some time.

It is unwise to embark upon an enterprise without adequate preparation.

286 Njoke o la nkombe la nkusu.

I heard it from the hawk and the parrot.

Hearsay ; no certain knowledge or proof.

287 Bolemo ntaonga, nsoi lim'el'omongo.

When the work is a failure the worker feels shame.

288 Jefa ntakyeka likinda.

The sun does not rise once only.

289 Botuli nkombo, lifeko lionga.

A blacksmith is sought after because the tools he makes are a success.

Good workmanship is the best recommendation.

290 Ecwa wilangi, ecwa loanga ; ecw'olole, ecw'oongi.

Where the person of rank goes, there goes the prisoner ; where the foolish person goes, there also goes the prosperous one.

There is one way for the honourable, the prisoner, the fool and the rich ; death is the common lot of all.
Cf. Eccles. 3. 19,20.

291 Kolokolo ntatombelaka kalakala.

Long ago does not carry for the distant past.

The long-standing debt is not carried away (or forgotten) by the long journey and absence of him to whom it is due.

A day of reckoning is sure to come.

292 Osimbi lokoi ntalekanaka bokoka.

He who goes (in quest of) fire-wood does not pass by a fallen tree.

A good opportunity should be seized.

293 Osimbi nyama ntalekanaka likili.

He who goes (hunting) animals, does not pass by their foot-prints.

He follows in their track until he catches one.

Improving an occasion. Cf. 292.

294 Olambya likili nd'oyau, tofelake oyokase.

You have left your mark (foot-prints) in the grass (as you fled), do not forget him who is searching for you.
Precaution.

295 Ikumw'iangi, w'ifutela lifi lokendo.

Run fast, you will ultimately return to walking.

A reproof to the over-confident.

296 Esi l'iangi, olembwa lifi lokendo.

A long distance with speed, you will ultimately be worn out walking.

Foresight, provident care for the future.

297 Eoto e'ofaya oki'nd'okendelaka.

A stranger's true friend (likened unto a relative) is the one with whom he previously kept company, i.e. a former acquaintance.

298 Ntasokolaka osimbi l'itswa.

They do not push against the person who goes with a piece of lighted copal (as a torch at night).

It is unwise to insult the person whose services are indispensable to you.

299 Bont'omoko ntatungolak'omongo.

One man cannot release himself.
Assistance is essential.

300 Bonto atakoate, atakosamany'akata.

A man who has not caught you up has not gripped you by the wrists.

Persevere; for escape is still possible.

301 Mboka ee w'oleka efa la liunga.

The road by which you are accustomed to pass cannot be mistaken.

302 Ocikaki lisala ntayaka ntengela.

He who left his garden does not cease to examine it.

303 Bonkokomo (bokau) ntaatak'oliko: nkanga wamba ntaatak'olangi.

The *bonkokomo* (or *bokau*) tree never has a creeper attached to it; a person who is always fighting never has a friend.

304 Ocwa nd'aliko afosekwa.

He who goes above (as up a tree) does not stay there for good.

305 Jofwa ja mbula wae bakungola.

The warning (reminder) of rain is thunder.

306 W'eci nzala ; toma mpiko.

You are lying down hungry, while there is food yonder.

If you are lying down hungry now, the fact that there is food coming later on will not appease your hunger.

307 Oomaki njoku ntal'alongo.

He who killed the elephant did not even partake of its blood.

308 Jomo ntsilak'esanga.

By resting only you will never get through the forest.

309 Esende ! otomba liseko.

A squirrel ! go stealthily towards the *liseko*.

When a squirrel sees an animal it utters sounds *ke-ke*, resembling a laugh which the natives call *liseko*.

Embrace the opportunity.

310 Ole la mpifo ntakosulaka.

He who is in a position of authority never coughs ; i.e. he never needs to cough to remind others of his presence, or that he wants food.

He is invested with rights and privileges, and therefore gets what he wants without asking for it.

311 Empempe ntumbaka likwa likambo.

A squirrel never condemns (decides a palaver against) a *likwa*.

The *likwa* is a fallen tree or bough where the squirrel hides.

312 Ntalimbaka inkune ntela.

It is imprudent to promise a little child a ripe plantain and then break your word—its cries will be unbearable.

313 Inkune imo ntakaak'imo ntela.

One little child never gives another a ripe plantain.

314 Lofeno l'okwa ofenol'ocumb'ekal.

Despise salt, you despise that which makes *bekai* savoury. *Bekai* is good food, but uneatable without salt. It is folly to despise what is indispensable.

315 Ikongo ifaotomba mengo, ikoka l'ikonga imoko.

A small back will not carry a large load of cassava, it is only able to carry a small packet.

A burden should be suited to the capacity of the bearer.

316 Lokai ntacwaka nd'okala, lutaka nd'afeka.

If thought (or mind) does not pass on before (as forethought), it subsequently returns (as an after-thought).

Indiscretion may lead to remorse.

"Le sage avant d'agir, réfléchit, examine; car la plus belle fleur souvent cache une épine."

A wise person, before acting, reflects, examines; for the most beautiful flower often hides a thorn.

317 Ntaamanaka la okofomba.

It is unwise to keep company with him who deceives you.

"He that takes a raven for his guide will light on carrion." Arabian.

318 Esende akene nk'iteko asimbi la lisambe nd'aliko.

When a squirrel sees you without a net for catching squirrels, he goes along with his tail up.

319 Nyongo awaka, w'onaka ndolo; botema ntakela "Ncila.

Your mother is dead, plant *ndolo* (cassava planted in the street near the old dwelling recently vacated); the stomach never says, I do not eat."

Having lost your helper, you must provide for your own needs.

320 Baolila loculu nda mboka, bant'auma benake.

They place the smithy in the road that everyone may see it.

A simile applied to a person who seeks for praise.

321 Olangaka waji ; otonak'ilongo.

You desire the wife ; but dislike her relatives.

Almost without exception this is true of natives ; because of the endless difficulties with regard to the dowry demanded by the wife's relatives.

322 Bondo oki jina.

The irritability of a boil.

Boils on the body make people irritable and difficult to live with. When a person manifests these traits, he may be asked, "Oh then, have you a boil?"

323 Mboloko ntolaka nteke la too nd'omwa.

Mboloko (small antelope) does not go out of a concourse of people with his little paws in his mouth. Rather he puts on extra speed to escape.

It is unwise to loiter in a place of danger.

324 Bocwi ow'asi ataye, ekucu etalola.

The person who went for water has not yet come ; the calabash is not yet full.

There is a reason for the delay.

325 Tokika ko-ko, banko nk'afe !

Pounding away, and making such a noise, only two plantains!

Much noise and fuss, and little to shew for it.

"Much ado about nothing." Shakespeare.

326 Aket'iyoy, w'ambaka.

When they call you, respond.

327 Akuol'iyoy, w'ambaka.

When they ask you, answer.

328 Wato boyokende la njake ntawinaka.

A canoe which travels with (carries) an *njake* (scoop used for baling out water) does not sink.

329 Ntasalaka ntokembola.

You do not clear the bush of your intended garden if you have not first explored the site.

"Look before you leap." Butler. Cf. Luke 14. 28.

330 Bona oyokende la nyango end'oyoyo afomonge liat'ise.

A child who lives with an active mother (a widow) will not have to wait long for a father (a step-father).

331 Nsoso emoko euta nyama, mbat'enkina eka liomba nko?

The only fowl (I had) was killed by an animal; where shall I get another to keep?

Unavailing lamentation. "No use crying over spilt milk."

332 Likoloto ntokaka el'ona.

The black and white monkey cannot bear to hear its young one cry.

Maternal affection.

333 Nsonge ntasilak'etalo.

Moon-gazing is never-ending.

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." Keats.

334 Akosangel'iyu, w'okaka.

When they tell you, hear.

335 Akosangel'iyu. w'okozaka.

When they tell you, listen.

336 Botal'ekole, nsamboka, ntabelama.

A long island and the river bank are not comparable.

337 Nkang'obe ; l'ankela.

An evil person ; they say it of me.

An evil person who is always saying, "They treat me badly," has earned the bad reputation.

338 Likali ntalicikalaka nd'illenge.

Partiality does not stay in the grass (of the recently vacated village site). It is still shewn in the new village by those addicted to it.

339 Bowa oki w'ene nkaka l'ekufa.

The dry season in which you see '*nkaka*' (a small kind of fish) whole.

Make good use of the present opportunity.

"Make hay while the sun shines."

340 Botsa w'esao ntakendaka la mpamba—ofolotala la wengi.

You should not go vigorously in a new clearing of an old village site—lest you be injured by thorns.

In a dangerous place walk circumspectly, or you may fall into evil.

341 Mpoke ekela, ecw'esuku, eambemaka nd'okeele.

A leaking pot becomes a useless pot, and lies under the eaves.

Reprobation. Cf. 2 Tim. 3. 8. Titus 1. 16.

342 Nsooza liso oyi! We mongo w'akundol'etafi.

Oh! I have knocked my eye out. You yourself have cut the branch (upon which you were sitting)!

A foolish man may bring about his own fate.

343 Bofala wemi, osing'okulu.

While the antelope is standing (before you), you are making string (for a net).

Unpreparedness.

"Have not thy cloak to make when it begins to rain."

344 Kanelaka fele! W'ikumwaka, w'uteyaka liso nd'afeka?

Think a little! Do you run and cast your eye behind? i.e. look backward while running. It has been known for a person acting so imprudently to fall into a pit.

A reproof to the thoughtless.

345 Eu njolele, w'oseka ; njutaka, w'olela.

While I was crying, you were laughing ; I returned,
and you were crying.

See Eceles. 9. 11. 1.c.

346 Tsa nda likaka, bolando nd'oloko.

Fire on the foot, sympathetic pain in the heart.

Sympathy. See 1 Cor. 12. 26. Heb. 4. 15.

347 Lokino j'onkenge otenak'akaka.

You treat leprosy as nothing, and your feet are
(ultimately) mutilated by it.

Disregarded warning is inevitably followed by evil
consequences.

"Little enemies and little wounds are not to be
despised."

348 Bosako nd'isika, etumba nd'ekulu.

News in the street, the attackers are on the road by
the stream.

While they are telling the news of a threatened
attack in the street, the attackers are already on the
borders of the village.

349 Bomong'ofambe ntakombolaka.

The owner of food has no great desire for it.

350 Ntatefelaka joi lif'olo, ntawea joi.

It is unwise to speak about a bad palaver without
first making sure of the veracity of it.

351 Elolomwa aofonola nkosi nyama l'ool'a joi.

The loud-speaking man takes away the meat from
the quiet one, because of his dearth of words.

352 Lotono nd'otema, lolango nd'anza.

Hatred in the heart, love without.

353 Nkang'ima ntisaka tsa bofambe.

A selfish person cannot hide food from the fire—because without fire he cannot cook it.

354 Basangi basa, tawilake joi—bafomb'ilanga.

When relatives quarrel, don't put in a word—they pretend to be at enmity.

355 Em'ameka'akatsaka lontombo ; meka aata mpoke : lontombo locikala l'emi.

I and my friend cooked food in a broken pot and leaves; he now has a pot; and the makeshift is left with me.

Left in adversity while his friend, who was as poor as he, is enjoying the good things of prosperity.

A lamentation on account of poverty.

356 Ilalila ntaung'okooci.

A child does not mistake its parent.

357 Wisa oki lombi (or loambe, or lolwaki ;)—wela nd'anza.

The hiding of the deaf lizard—its tail outside.

When frightened the deaf lizard hides its head and leaves its tail exposed, and so it is easily killed.

Applied to the deluded who think that their secret deeds will never be known.

Cf. Luke 8. 17.

358 Iemembe ya lisile ilel'anto, afoat'onto ondoles'ende.

Like the tarsier which is always making a chattering noise, *Iemembe* crys for other people but will have no one to cry for him. Applied to those who neglect their own affairs.

Cf. 359 & 271.

359 Iemembe ya lisili embelaka nk'anto ; ntembelak'omongo.

Like the tarsier which makes a chattering noise all the time, *Iemembe* sings while working for other people, but does not sing for himself.

"Do not forget your own field, and plough your neighbour's."

Cf. 358.

360 Ntetamaka lifaya lik'iyō ntakosuka.

When on a visit, you do not sleep in the place where they did not press you to stay.

You do not become the guest of those who do not welcome you.

361 Bote w'eonga wemalaka.

A dead tree continues to stand (often long after green trees have been blown down.)

The unexpected often happens.

362 Namb'eki Jangi.

Jangi found a dead elephant in the forest. He hurried home to his village, and informed the people of the fact. After having told every one, he returned, intending to take his share of the meat; but he found that the villagers had taken it all away.

"He shows the road to others, but sees it not himself."

363 Bokano l'eunelo ntelamaka.

A threat and a fight are not equal.

364 Bolengeia mpako ntatomba tsa ; iolokota.

He who examined the honey and took no fire with him, was stung.

He suffered for his indiscretion.

365 Wali okunda'ome ntokaka.

A wife who is beaten by her husband never pays attention to him.

366 Nkang'oonswa afitak'oya w'onto, eleng'eki Isekalosi la lisoko likae.

Isekalosi went to the hunt, and killed a *lisoko* (large kind of antelope): but got separated from the rest of the hunters, and had to carry it home alone. It was heavy, so he tied it on sticks, and rolled it in leaves; it then looked like a corpse hastily prepared for burial. When he arrived at the entrance of the village, it was

raining hard, and he asked for shelter at the first house. Both the master of the house and his wife refused, saying, "We do not want the smell of your corpse here." He passed on, and came to a house where the people called to him to come in and shelter from the rain. He asked if they would not object to his bundle being placed under the eaves; they said, "Not at all; we are sorry for you." He went in, and after resting and getting warm, called for leaves, and the loan of a knife; and asked if they had a good cooking fire. Then he opened the so-called corpse, and shared it with his benefactors, who were delighted.

The man and woman who had refused him shelter then came along to visit him, and appeared quite friendly; but he said to them, *Nkang'oonswa afitak'oya w'onto*—A cruel person spoils a man's kindness.

Kindness is the best policy—it pays in the end.

367 *Botema ntakendaka l'onto afofwa.*

The stomach cannot accompany a person without his remembering it; i.e. it will remind him of its need of food by craving for it.

368 *Ekembo ek'otsa o libwo—ekembo ekiso o ise.*

The strength of the head is the hair—our strength is our father.

369 *Emwamweta ntaalak'ifele.*

A smiling person has not looked at the pit for catching animals.

Not all who appear with smiling faces are happy; nor are all who appear to be wealthy in actual possession of wealth.

370 *Yomba icwaki iolenya; lookuso losila.*

The thing which was lost appears; enquiry ceases.

When a lost thing is found, there is no more enquiry about it.

371 *Etefela nkusu ele nkele.*

Where parrots screech, there palms are growing.

372 Asa, nka okinde ; mpafala nko mbimbi.

Seek, then you will be satisfied ; waiting does not give satisfaction.

373 Ikoko, ocikak'em'esanga ; nkina w'ifisama nda loso l'etumba !

Ikoko (garden knife), leave a small section of bush in your garden ; perhaps you will hide there in the day of battle !

374 Eka ngoya ; eka ngoya ; ntoyelaka tenake ?

At my mother's ; at my mother's ; do you not bring (anything) that we may see ?

A rebuke to a wife who is always giving the above excuse for having been absent from home.

375 Ntalimbaka la loculu, balimbaka nk'oluka.

You cannot deceive with regard to smithing they do deceive with regard to hunt-witchcraft, (practised by means of an alleged pain in the side, indicating in which direction the animals are to be found).

In smithing the work done is proof of the blacksmith's ability ; but in the case of a hunt-wizard, the test gives no certain proof.

376 Ndakaki Lomema laka laka, ntoka ; Nkoi euta Lomema nd'otsa, ko aowa.

I taught *Lomema* repeatedly, he did not regard it ; the leopard sprang upon his head, and he died.

Obstinate disregard of warning may lead to death.

377 Bonolu atanga bofaya ok'ise nk'okwala.

A child regards his father's guest as a slave.
Childish ignorance.

378 Ikele ntitefelaka isungu ntiy'okwela.

A stream does not splash unless a stick falls in.
There can be no effect without a cause.

379 Oki nd'otonga acwaka likinda.

He who was one of a company has become solitary.

You may now have plenty of relatives and friends; but the time may come when you will be left alone.

380 Mbwa aal'afeka, aoya la nkolo.

When a dog looks back, it is a sign that he is accompanying his master.

Coming events cast their shadows before.

381 Ya webi w'enaka nko l'aiso.

What belongs to your friend you only see with your eyes. (It does not become yours except by his gift).

382 Mba isimbi l'onto.

Palm-nuts which some one is carrying.

You think them good and desire to possess them; he gives you some, you find them bad; the desire for them immediately leaves you.

383 Lofekwa lokuma la ntonga.

Thread is made famous by the needle, (without which it would be useless).

384 Bocos'a lisoko ; likambo ntilaka l'iangi.

Leg of *lisoko* (a large swift antelope); a palaver is not finished by speed.

A palaver will not be ended by running away, even though you be fleet-footed as the *lisoko* antelope.

385 Otakanya aten'obe.

He who has not repented has not seen evil.

Having seen no signs of the evil (of which he has been warned), he has not repented of his deed.

386 Wali ntozaka l'ayanga.

A wife is not obtained by ostentatious display.

387 Ole nda lilongo nteaka jefa licwa.

He who is in an open clear place does not know that the sun has gone (set).

388 Tusak'itulu ; nsasamba itakekela.

Do not throw away the old garment ; you are not yet used to the new one.

389 Tusake wese ; wunyu botaka'akata.

Do not throw away a bone ; a piece of lean meat has not yet fallen into your hands.

390 Botema, etama ; okokaaka ntaata.

Stomach, go to sleep ; the one who gives to you has nothing.

It is useless to wait any longer for food.

391 Onden'afoli aolek'etafi etacwa.

The one who saw the *bafole* fruit went to the branch which bore none, and came away empty-handed. The deserving fails often to get his deserts.

392 Iteta onlongaka ; em'okambola, siki ofonda la we la mba.

The basket now wins ; I saved you (picked you up) or you would be decomposed, you and your palm-nuts.

Used as a reminder to an erring wife.

The true story is as follows ; *Ifonda* was the wife of *Lokaola*. In some serious palaver, *Lokaola* passed her over as a peace-offering, and she was actually placed in position for her head to be cut off. But *Iseokombe* passed at that moment and feeling compassion for the woman, put a slave of his own in her place, and took *Ifonda* for his wife. After a time, however, *Ifonda* took a dislike to the man who had saved her life, and ran away from him. Search was made, and it was found that she had returned to *Lokaola*, her former husband who had treated her so badly.

Seeing her pass frequently, carrying a basket of palm-nuts, *Iseokombe* adopted the above as his *losako*.

This is a good illustration in dealing with backsliders.

393 Okend'a we boseka ngo lofose lokunda.

He who is your friend is like the palmer-worm boring into you. (It eats away the heart of the palm).
False friendship.
Cf. Ps. 41. 9.

394 Isekelenge eka Mange endusak'eona la jembel'omende.

Isekelenge, native of *Mange*, who threw away the *beona* (good kind of edible caterpillars) when he shouted "*Bomende!*" (a large antelope).

Isekelenge was out seeking for *beona* and had a good leaf-full, when he came upon a *bomende* asleep. He threw away his *beona* and rushed off to the village, calling, "*Bomende, bomende!*" But when he and the men he brought from the village arrived, they found that the antelope had fled. He then bethought himself of his *beona* and went back to the place where he had thrown them away. They had crawled off in all directions, and he found none. Both antelope and caterpillars had escaped.

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

395 Ntasonaka mbimbo baenza.

It is imprudent to choose immature *mbimbo* fruit.

396 Nongo, wamba nk'aende.

Many wives, fighting amongst men.
Polygamy causes strife among men.

397 Bofambe ntokoka, fal'ise, kela tole.

The food is insufficient, wait for father, then we will eat.
Patient expectation.

398 Efanza acima nda mboka, ocika nde wij'a mboka.

The *efanza* (a small animal which turns over the soil) is digging in the road; how much more beyond the road.

Cf. Luke 23. 31.

Be not like *Etungola-nkoku* (a man who untied guinea fowls). He caught several guinea fowls in his traps. On the way home, he gave a guinea fowl to every person who greeted him with *Isango*! Finally he arrived home without a single guinea fowl. His wife took umbrage at his spendthrift ways, and determined to teach him a lesson. She accordingly cooked a packet of native cotton, and set it before him for his supper. The lesson had the desired effect.

400 Etumba ntaotaka bona ow'olotsi.

War begets no good offspring.

401 Ntakelaka, Tol'oso. (boso)

Do not say, "It (food) is beyond."
Prepare for emergencies.

402 Mbio eki loto.

The wild cat which the hornets (attacked).

A wild cat was climbing a tree in quest of food, when she was attacked by hornets. She fell to the ground; and to save herself from further torture, simulated death.

Just then a hunter came along, and seeing her lying there said, "I shall go home with some meat after all." He stooped down and picked up the cat; but at that moment the hornets attacked him. Thereupon he released his hold of the cat, and fled from the scene. He, instead of going home with meat, went home full of hornets' stings.

Cf. Haggar 1. 9. f.c. Jer. 17. 11. R.V.

403 Nta sambaka likambo la mbotsw'a ngoya.

A palaver cannot be settled by maternal relationship, i.e. by shewing partiality towards a maternal relative.

404 Ikulu ionga l'oat'a nkusa.

The goodness of the string is from the fine strands of the fibre.

When the fibre is well prepared the string will be good.

Cf. 1 Cor. 3. 10, 11.

405 Ofondaka nd'okoka ; joi ntafondaka.

A fallen tree perishes; a deed is imperishable.

1922 Baskerville Uganda.pdf

THE KING OF THE SNAKES

AND OTHER FOLK-LORE STORIES
FROM UGANDA

BY
MRS. GEORGE BASKERVILLE

ILLUSTRATED BY MRS. E. G. MORRIS

LONDON
THE SHELDON PRESS
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C. 2
NEW YORK AND TORONTO : THE MACMILLAN CO.
KAMPALA : THE UGANDA BOOKSHOP

Then he understood that the Guardian of the Snakes had spoken truly, for those snakes are the slaves of the white man—they carry his women and children, his cattle and his goods, and where they arrive the old days fade away and new days come. The old times never return, for the country is changed for ever.

PROVERBS

1. He who runs in the morning will tire before the day's march is over.

2. The monkey cannot be trusted to give a fair judgment on forest matters.

3. Do not call out for help before you need it.

4. He who has never had a sorrow cannot speak words of comfort.

5. Even a wise man does not know everything.

6. You can't dig with a spade handle, but it helps the spade to dig.

7. A dog knows his own business and his master's too.

8. Friendship is like a tailor's seam; it is the unpicking which causes trouble.

9. Splutter splutter isn't fire.

10. If you suffer in order to be beautiful don't blame anyone but yourself.

11. You never can tell if bananas are worth the trouble of making beer until you have done some of the work.

12. He who makes friends is wiser than he who quarrels.

13. Never give advice to an enemy.

14. Caution is not cowardice: even the ants march armed.

15. He who goes slowly goes far.

16. It is no good asking the spirits to help you run if you don't mean to sprint.

17. No man fears what he has seen grow.

18. He who says others are swindling will not lend you anything.

19. Beer isn't food: don't be content with it.

20. He who has two homes never gets a meal.

21. The champion who has thrown his opponent says: "That is enough."

22. You can't tell the age of a beardless man, or the time on a cloudy day.

23. What the herd will stand the cowherd will put up with.

24. Let me die for something worth while.

25. The grumbler does not leave his job, but he discourages possible applicants.

26. The iron fears the blacksmith.

27. A man who is always being slandered is like a knife constantly in use—no one has time to polish it.

28. Lazy people always set others to work.

29. Everyone has his own tastes.

30. Wait until you are grown up before you try to jump as far as your father.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BILLING AND SONS, LTD., GUILDFORD AND ESHER

1922 Cerulli Galla.pdf

HARVARD AFRICAN STUDIES

VOLUME III

VARIA AFRICANA III

EDITORS

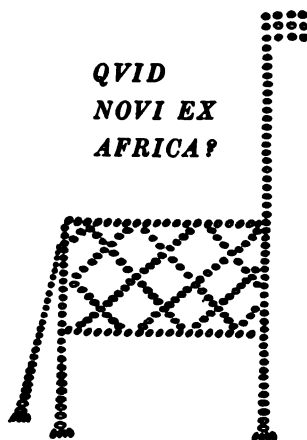
E. A. HOOTON, PH.D., B.LITT.

NATICA I. BATES

ASSISTANT EDITOR

RUTH OTIS SAWTELL

***QVID
NOVI EX
AFRICA?***



**THE AFRICAN DEPARTMENT OF THE
PEABODY MUSEUM OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U.S.A.**

1922

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
V. GIUFFRIDA-RUGGERI The actual state of the question of the most ancient Egyptian populations	3
E. CERULLI The folk-literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia	9
H. S. STANNUS The Wayao of Nyasaland	229
C. PRABODY Note on prehistoric collections from Northwest Africa in the Peabody Museum of Harvard University	373

created us. Wealth which is great is the first misfortune. If money increases, the king will say, "I wish to seize it for myself in some way." Therefore, wealth is a misfortune. The second misfortune is thy wife. She falls in love with a valiant warrior, and then, if this warrior loves her, he kills thee, marries her, and flees away to another country. The third misfortune is God who has created us. He has created us, one white, one red, one black as coal. Our father in the beginning was Adam; our mother Eve; we are all brothers. If he had made us all of the same aspect, we should not have killed one another; we should not have sold one another; we should not have destroyed one another. As God created us in the beginning, we should have loved one another, if we had all looked alike. Now he has made us of three kinds. Therefore, we kill one another. Therefore, God, also, is a misfortune.

14

My Father's chick-peas.

Namni tókko Salálê ka 'éti Šodtu dufé, šumburá buqqifaté. Abbân šumburá argé: yâ ilmā hādā ráwu, mál šumburákiyā fiáthu? Yó hadākó rófte, éga ati abbākōti. Miqān abbākó nān fiāta! ġēdē, šumburá buqqifaté fié.

A man departed from Salálê and came to Shoa; he began to pull up [small plants of] chick-peas. The owner of the chick-peas saw him [and called out to him], "O son of a mother with whom I have lain, why dost thou eat my chick-peas?" "If thou hast lain with my mother, then thou art my father. I am, therefore, eating my father's chick-peas!" replied the other, and finished pulling up the chick-peas.

Notes. Šumburákiyā (line 2) is an imitation of the speech of Shoa for the Máčča šumburākó.

15

The Máčča Galla.

The Máčča are accustomed to work in their houses and for their families, while the Tulámā consider domestic work suitable only for women. So the jester, Abbā Wādāgo, having seen a Máčča who was carrying timber on his back, pointed him out to his lord, saying, "Maččiččā kána argi! Naqđteni ofi yó hobobsisáni, námā akkasāti qaltí." "Look at this Máčča! If women were to cohabit carnally among themselves, they would produce such men!"

V. PROVERBS

1. *Garagalčtí millí matá hōqā.* "The opposite part, the feet, scratch the head."

When undeserving people have an office or obtain an unexpected victory over deserving people.

2. *Yâ gówā, et dubbān bówā!* "O fool, there is a precipice at thy back."

For one who is pleased with false flattery.

3. *Ōlān bullé bēka, akkatti bulé abbātū bēka.* "Good day, good evening! he knows how to say, but how he has passed the time, his father (alone) knows."

Everyone can make salutations, but only the family is truly interested in its own relative.

4. *Akka bīyā wāllūn tyya.* "The skin creaks according to the country."

Different countries, different customs.

5. *Baān baē`ngullān.* "The courser once gone forth (from the stall) is no longer pure."

6. *Intahillē dāa hāqā gorsitē.* "The young girl wishes to give advice to her mother on childbirth."

7. *Kaṇ`oḡḡi qabē qangalāsē buā.* "He who has nothing to do, scatters and gathers."

8. *Nān tolčā`ti tortorsē.* "I make and thou spoilest."

9. *Ġirū dīzā | ġirū sizā | rāfū fiṭṭē | rafū didelē.* "Dost thou think that the life of the poor man is living? The sprouts are at an end! Sleep is denied him!"

10. *Silā`nolū kaḡēlā dūra wāmī.* "Since the beggar would come any way, it's best to invite him first."

It is better to begin by satisfying the most insistent.

11. *Sānti baū gaē wdl arrabā | namni du`ū gaē wdl ḡālattā.* "When cows are about to go out, they lick one another; when men are about to die, they love one another."

12. *Tókko ka`ūf tókko du`ū laṭṭi baā.* "One rises, one dies, the land increases."

The family property is increased as much by the birth of a son who can conquer new lands, as by the death of an old man who leaves his heritage to the survivors.

13. *Yómu att mimmiṭṭā | ant sanāfiččā | yómu att lilmō | ant qarābāqā.* "When thou art pepper, I am mustard; when thou art a needle, I am a knife."

A corsaire, corsaire et demi.

14. *Mukni tokkičči`n'ara malē`nbobā'u.* "A single stick smokes but does not burn."

15. *Karān sobān darbān dīzbittī nāmā qibā.* "People obstruct return by the way of falsehood."

On account of the difficulty which the liar has in defending himself against the questions of his listeners.

16. *Hārkā`bba tokkōtti ibiddā qabū`nsodātānu.* "The hand of a single person, even if it holds fire, is not feared."

Compare Proverb 14.

17. *Isa`rgantūf hinargātu.* "What has been blown away is not found again."

18. *Ġibīčča kōrmā ta`ū ḡōrānto kīssātti bēku.* "That the calf has become a bull is known in the enclosure."

Only the members of a family can appreciate the virtues of their relative. Compare Proverb 3.

19. *Anā ḡātūn bīelā`nbāsū yó qābant tolčān malē.* "To say, 'O poor fellow,' does not appease hunger, but setting up the oven and baking bread [does]."

20. *Kán dægátti rorissé`nbaqádu.* "He who has despised the poor man will not grow rich."

21. *Wāqni arifattú láfā qaqu`nolú.* "What God has sent does not fail to reach the earth."

22. *Iyēsñif ibíddi tuttuqá`nǵalláttu.* "The poor man and the fire do not like to be poked."

23. *Didíga garáda qusé ilkán`ndiebsu.* "The vomit which comes from the stomach cannot be sent back by the teeth."

It is impossible to restrain the impulses of the soul.

24. *'Angón ñannán`angó`nta'ú.* "To eat a great deal is not strength."

Doing many things does not mean doing them well.

25. *Yá gára qalbinkó ġirú. Gennán manni`línán owāté.* "When [the husband] says [to one of his wives], 'O heart of mine,' the other looks sullen."

26. *Kán argatánirrá kán abdatántu ħálá.* "What one hopes for is better than what one finds."

27. *Ganamán baáni Wāq durá`nbaánu.* "They went forth in the morning, but they did not go forth before God."

However much one tries to do evil in secret, divine punishment will not be lacking.

28. *Mánā tókko lubbú kogá, mánā tókko okkoté kogá.* "With one wife, the heart is warmed; with the other wife the kettle is warmed."

Two wives are necessary: one beautiful and one rich.

29. *Ani hamma namá`ngaú, namni`gará ná`ngaú.* "I do not reach the height of others; the things of others do not reach my thought."

He who is not powerful has neither cares nor worries.

30. *Ilmón gáfā háqā`nsodātu.* "The calves do not fear the horns of their mother."

31. *Buddiēnā námā qubsú ellerrattí brékú.* "One knows even when one neighbor's bread is in the oven."

Neighbors' affairs are well known.

32. *Bintēnsā`rgatáni náma`ññáttu.* "They have found the wild beast; they will no longer eat the people."

When an overbearing person finds some one to resist him.

33. *Ofi ġettún dirsākó`nǵéttu.* "'I myself,' she said; 'My husband,' she did not say." One thinks first of all of oneself, then of others.

34. *Akka`balú sirbā mormā ġallisá.* "Move your neck according to the music."

35. *Dieġín dieġeġis ħōrā`ññáqda! ġétté fāqñ.* "'However poor I may be, I will not eat fleshings,' said the dresser of skins."

However, the Galla believe that the dressers of skins eat the fleshings of the skins they have dressed. The proverb is used of one who, being famous for a vice, swears and swears falsely that he does not possess it.

36. *Egẓeníf gābín bodē adēmtu.* "The tail and repentance go behind."

37. *Atú fiddí atú fiṭṭi.* "Thou broughtest; thou thyself destroyest."

38. *Kan namā 'o'é ellē ḡalátti namā biṭillá.* "He who is warm for anyone will cook cakes for him under the oven."

For friends and favorites, one attempts anything.

39. *Hāqā yú ṅqabú akkaḡ ṅqabá! ḡettē gamalēn.* "'If I have no mother, I have my grandmother!' said the monkey."

If one has not the most desirable thing, at least one has always something good.

40. *Iṭṭi qabatáfi ṡíní hollá ḡirá.* "What keeps him is that there is a wedding at his neighbor's."

Therefore he does not go to the festival of those at a distance, even if they are relatives.

41. *Aní ḡirán sēa gōgānko gabá ḡirá! ḡettē kuruppēn.* "'I thought I was alive and instead my skin is already at the market,' said the gazelle."

This means the same as the Italian: *Vender la pelle dell' orso prima d'averlo ammazzato*, "To sell the bear's skin before you have killed him."

42. *Hinqābnu hinaddānu! ḡettē qāqēn.* "'We have none and we do not shave,' said the bald-headed man."

One must resign oneself to misfortunes and assume *bonne mine*.

43. *Qalbín yartún bisān kēssa qabatē qēḡboti.* "The fool was thirsty in the midst of water."

44. *Ná qalānu nqumūn qallótti dumá malé! ḡettē tafkín.* "'If they cut my throat, they could not kill me, but with boiling water I am destroyed,' said the flea."

Against each enemy, use the suitable weapon.

45. *ḡabbín hōtú ṅmar'ātu.* "A calf that is sucking does not bellow."

Thus the vassal does not rebel so long as he has a rich country to exploit.

46. *Sōrús ṡāmús iḡḡi misirā lamá.* "Whether it rains or stops raining, the lentils have two eyes."

For one who does not conform to circumstances and events.

47. *Harkí namā rukutá malé hómā ṅalēlu.* "The outsider claps his hands but nothing moves."

48. *Laṭṭi ṅmbēknē qarqā duwāqā wān iṭṭi ṅmbēkne dāfqā duwāqā.* "The ascent to an unknown land is useless; what is not known, is useless to toil for."

49. *Yó dubbatán bubbē yō ṡāl ḡēqān buqqē.* "If they speak, they are wind; if they are silent, they are gourds."

Of futile people.

50. *Kan qaban gabá ṅgané gadí qīsān bakkē gutti.* "They took it and it did not fill the ring of the thumb and forefinger; they left it and it filled the whole plain."

For example, when a person is asked questions and he says he does not know; whereas, if he had not been asked, he would have said even more than was necessary.

51. *Kán çálún fidá! ĵēqén mánā mitt harkâ kaé.* "He said, 'I will bring the best there is!' and he put his hand into the hole of the white ant."

The awkward, with the best of intentions, cause the worst calamities.

52. *Ullên qódâ kopâ çabsá.* "The stick only breaks earthenware utensils."

On the other hand, the stick is useful to correct those who should be corrected. *The Galla Spelling Book* gives the proverb thus: *Ullên qódâ qofâ çabsâ*; Loransiyos, however, says *kopâ* instead of *qofâ*.

53. *Akka garâ ofi harkí marťô`nmurú.* "The hand does not cut the pantaloons according to one's own belly."

It is better to work for oneself and not rely upon strangers.

54. *Korâ maččalâ`ndirâ | kōrí wāq`arkâ ĵirâ.* "The saddle and the cover of the saddle are sewed; pride is in the hands of God."

All articles are made and the rich may buy them; but God alone may be proud.

55. *Kán sodātán du 'á kán enolé du 'á.* "What they fear is death; that which never fails is death."

It is, therefore, useless to fear it.

56. *Akka madâ qubâ yānní garâ gubbâ.* "As the wound the finger, so thought inflames the mind."

57. *Kán qibbî qibbú qotté gindô qarqátti bāta.* "The one who is oppressed with misery, after having ploughed, carries the plough on his back up the slope."

The poor man endures all misfortunes.

58. *Kán hāqān qitté qáyā hāqā fitté.* "That (daughter) who has grown to equal stature with her mother, has put an end to the mother's decorating herself."

59. *Afān tolān afā tolā çālā* (*Galla Spelling Book: çālā*). "A good conversation is better than a good bed."

60. *Dubbí barbadda sarēn gabâ daqŕŕi.* "He looks for quarrels; the dog goes to the market."

Because of the repugnance which the Mussulman Galla have for the dog, if a dog goes to a place where many people are assembled, he will surely receive some kicks. So it is with one who looks for quarrels.

61. *Bôr unbēknén qodān bukô lamā.* "Since one does not know the morrow, (let there be prepared) a vessel with two raised cakes."

62. *Kán har 'aó ñātté fitté kán bōrí māl kēsserré?* "If thou eatest everything today, what hast thou kept for tomorrow?"

63. *Kán sobú`nsokoksú.* "A lie cannot be overtaken."

It is difficult without witnesses to prove that a liar is such. It is the opposite of the Italian proverb: *La bugia ha le gambe corte*, "A lie has short legs".

64. *Kán qūfé dāmmā tufá.* "He who is sated, spits out honey."

65. *Dabā manā falamā wdyā*. "For one who has no house, it is a good thing to bring lawsuits."

Since he has everything to gain and nothing to lose.

66. *Ho 'ú! ġennán diddé ol kizñán haté*. "'Take it,' we said to him, and he refused; we put it back and he stole it."

Forbidden things are a temptation.

67. *Ñātā ngabbatānu yādā gabbātu*. "Upon food one does not grow fat; upon thought one fattens."

68. *Namnt biyānā; nagā! ġēdē nāmā gaā; fayā! ġēdē namātti fayā*. "The men of this country say: 'Greeting,' and enter people's houses; they say: 'Hail!' and they carry away the people."

An allusion to the spies and to the seizures and confiscations so frequent in the Galla kingdoms.

69. *Aní qēnsā ngabú qubā nán oqāqda | aní kizsa ngabu ijsā nán dow 'āqda*. "I have no nails, I scratch myself with my fingers; I have no brain, I look at it with my eyes."

For one who looks without understanding.

70. *Sañt hāqā intālā farsō qal 'ō*. "Offspring of the mother, the daughter is poor beer."

Tel père, tel fils. (Like father, like son.)

71. *Wāmīčči ulfinā ollún salptnā*. "It is lightness not to respond to a heavy invitation."

Here, the Galla play upon words; between *ulfinā*, which means both "heavy" and "worthy of respect" and *salptnā*, "light" materially as well as "contemptible."

72. *Hiqin gadāntu isē olāntu tufatī*. "The lower lip scorns the upper lip."

Cf. "The pot calls the kettle black."

73. *Karāqāf garatū gargār nāmā bāsā*. "The way and the thought divide people."

As travellers separate at the crossroads, so differences of opinion separate friends.

74. *Hōrā ngāin harrótti maččofté*. "Thou hast not yet reached the warm spring and thou art already intoxicated with the water of the pool."

For boasts made before going to war.

75. *Mi 'ēffatē ná arrābī ġēdē sogīddi*. "'[The other time] I was sweet; lick me [now]!' said the salt."

For one who, having once yielded, then prepares to resist the second time.

76. *Otū nkolfún gubbaqde! ġēttē akkātn*. "'If I had not laughed, I should have been burnt,' said the parched chick-peas."

The Abyssinians and the Galla while cooking parched chick-peas (Amharic: *qollō*; Galla: *akkāē*) are in the habit of sprinkling them with water. Then the chick-peas crack (the proverb says, "laugh"). The proverb is applied when distraction from a long piece of work is needed.

77. *Sarē bisān font mi 'ēffaté'ndubbūtu.* "The dog who likes soup does not quarrel."

Because he fears to lose his dinner. Cf. proverb 65.

78. *Namnī qufū dubbīn qufā.* "If a man comes, a quarrel comes."

This is almost a literal translation of the Amharic proverb *sāw maṭṭā nāgār ymaṭṭāl*, "A man has come; a quarrel will come."

79. *Otū kán sí'ñjedān dagēse kán sí kāān hiññātu! ġettē sizerēn.* "If thou hadst heard what (ill) they said of thee, thou wouldst not have eaten what they served up for thee," said the gossips."

For insincere hospitality.

80. *Bzēké bofā milā dowé.* "Wisely He (God) denied feet to the serpent."

Because, if he had feet also, poisonous as he is, he would have destroyed the world.

81. *Otū dullaččī ġirū gorbī dūttī.* "While the old cow lives, the calf dies."

Death sometimes spares the old and takes the young.

82. *Toltēn'ntoltū intallī akkaōn guddīftu.* "As to being good, the girl brought up by her grandmother is not good."

Because the grandmother, left without a daughter, brings up her granddaughter with too many caresses.

83. *Dagaé ġettē'nodiesini | argé! ġettē'ndubbātini | kresāsā otū'nubātini.* "Do not speak, saying, 'I have seen him,' if thou hast not first searched his heart."

One should know things and persons well before speaking of them.

84. *Otū'nubatīn qubā'ngubbātīn.* "If thou hast not examined, do not burn thy finger."

That is, do not put your finger in the fire; do not undertake an enterprise, without having first considered well whether it can be successful. Cf. preceding proverb.

85. *Gorōn dubbī'nmargū abbān ofī'nargū.* "Nothing sprouts in the enclosure [if] the master does not himself watch over it."

This corresponds to the Italian, "The eye of the master fattens the horse," *L'occhio del padrone ingrassa il cavallo*.

86. *Kán čabā tufaté agabū bulā.* "He who has scorned the piece of bread will pass the night fasting."

87. *Guddī guddā! Marqān bulé afān qubbā.* "O great wonder! The cold pudding burns the mouth."

When one who is considered cowardly or insignificant vanquishes a valiant man.

88. *Namnī iḡḡā tókko namnī niti tókko tokkūmān qūmtu.* "The man who has but one eye and the man who has but one wife perish in one and the same moment."

Because, if the one eye is lost or the one wife is lost, it is all over with them.

89. *Ati gurbā dubbī Mašašā Sāyfū sitti'ndēbīn.* "O youth, do not let the affair of Mašašā Sāyfū be repeated in thy case."

Mašašā Sāyfū, *daḡḡāč*, made an expedition against the Gullālī. Notwithstanding the thousand boasts made by him before the fight, he, with his whole army, was surrounded

and had to pay the Galla a great ransom. Thus, for the Galla of Shoa "the affair of Mašašä Säyfü" became proverbial, like the Italian *pifferi di montagna* ("mountain fifers").

90. *Amarri`ndallagú buddtēn šān tufāta*. "The Amara who does not cultivate the earth spits upon five loaves."

This is said of one who, not having worked himself, despises the work of others. The Amara are, as is well known, despisers of agricultural work, which, on the contrary, is held in esteem among the Galla. The proverb belongs to the Harar.

91. *Harrē wāḡḡīn olé akka harrē qūfā*. "He has stayed with the ass; he emits farts like the ass."

Cf. the corresponding Amharic and Tigrinan proverbs.

92. *Kān barandā lakktsi | kōtt`arkākō harktsi!* "Never mind about the matter of this year; come and pull out my arm."

It is related that a robber who had entered a woman's house, having thrust his arm into a vessel of grain, could not pull it out again. The woman who had been to the spring to draw water, having come back, set down the large jug without noticing the thief and, being tired, exclaimed, "*Yā barandā!*" "Oh, this (unlucky) year!" The thief then burst out with the above-mentioned phrase which afterwards became proverbial.

93. *Nātti`ndufīn sitti`ndufā! ḡēḡē busān*. "'Do not come to me; I will not come to thee,' said the malaria."

Because whoever does not go to the malarial zone is not affected by the disease. This is said of one who does not attack without being provoked by his adversary.

VI. RIDDLES

1. *Guyā namā gadī halkān namā olī*. "In the daytime below man, in the night above man."

Answer: The fowl.

In the daytime the fowls are in the yard in front of the house; at night, according to the Abyssinian custom, they are above the ceiling of the hut, that is, in the space between the ceiling of the room and the roof of the hut.

2. *Kān du`āni olī, kān ḡirāni gadī*. "Over those who are dead, beneath those who are living."

Answer: The earth.

3. *Irrī du`ā ḡalī du`ā giddūn ḡirā*. "That which is over is dead; that which is under is dead; that which is between is alive."

Answer: A man in bed. The bed is usually made of an ox-hide, and the covering is another skin.

4. *Hundūmā kēssa kāē fuḡē bisān kēssa kāē fuḡū qaḡḡabē*. "It went into everything and it caught; it went into water and it could not catch."

Answer: Fire.

5. *Horikô biëllamâ kâbâ kîssa ñkâánu.* "My cattle have only one eye; do not put them in the hut."

Answer: Fire, whose eye is the flame.

6. *Kaḡún qaḡábu. Kunó qabí.* "By running one does not reach it. Here, take it."

Answer: The sun, whose light is present everywhere, although it is intangible.

7. *Malkâ gaé qasí.* "Having reached the ford, it made a noise."

Answer: The handle of the lance.

When the Galla reach a ford, they have a custom of striking the ground with the handle of the lance, perhaps in order to exorcise the genius of the river.

1922 Boas-Simango Ndau.pdf



VOL. 35.

APRIL-JUNE, 1922.

No. 136.

THE
JOURNAL OF
AMERICAN FOLK-LORE.

EDITED BY
FRANZ BOAS.

Associate Editors.

GEORGE LYMAN KITTREDGE.
AURELIO M. ESPINOSA.

C.-MARIUS BARBEAU.
ELSIE CLEWS PARSONS.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
1. RIDDLES FROM NEGRO SCHOOL-CHILDREN IN NEW ORLEANS, LA.	A. E. Perkins 105
2. UMBUNDU TALES, ANGOLA, SOUTHWEST AFRICA . . .	William C. Bell 116
3. TALES AND PROVERBS OF THE VANDAU OF PORT-UGUESE SOUTH AFRICA	{ Franz Boas } { C. Kamba Simango } 151
4. THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY	205

LANCASTER, PA., AND NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.
G. E. STECHERT & CO., NEW YORK, AGENTS.

Generated on 2022-03-27 14:10 GMT / https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044100884154
Public Domain, Google-digitized / http://www.hathitrust.org/access_use#pd-google

- rikabuda risa remadzwa. iwewe nasa kundibonga, ngokuti ndini
 10 ndakuitire nyasha dzisikabviri dzokureka soro rako kúpotera mukanwa
 mgangu. apana chiro chinopinda mukanwa mge thika chinobuda."

(b) BONGO NE ZINYAMŪTANDA.

(Coast Dialect.)

- nge zuva limge bongo lichirga nyama lakakhamga nge phondo.
 nolusongana ne zinyamūtanda lakati, "zinyamūtanda ndinozokupa
 musalo mukulu, kudali ungangwinisa müsolo wako mūmukulo wangu,
 ubvise phondo landikhama." zinyamūtandu lakangwinisa müsolo
 5 walo mūmukulo we bongo. likabisa phondo. zinyamūtanda nola-
 pedja kūbisa phondo lakati kuna bongo, "wochindipa mushalo wangu
 wowandigondisa." bongo lakati, "unoda mushalo wakadini. azizivi
 kūnaka zenda kuitila? zokungwinisa müsolo wako mukanwa mge
 bongo ukabudga ucha lemadjwa. iwewe nasa kundidenda, ngokuti
 10 ndini ndakuidile nyasha djichingabvili djokulega müsolo wako kū-
 ngwina mukanwa mgangu. apana chilo chinopinda mukanwa mge
 bongo chinobudya."

THE HYENA AND THE CRANE.¹

One day Hyena was choked by a bone. | When he met Crane, he
 said, "Crane, I will give you | a great reward if you can put your
 head into my throat | and take out the bone which chokes me."
 Crane put his head (5) into the throat of Hyena and pulled out the
 bone. When Crane had finished pulling out | the bone, he said to
 Hyena, "Now give me my reward that you promised me." | Hyena
 said, "How much of a reward do you want? Is it not enough | what
 I have done for you, to put your head into the mouth of Hyena | and
 come out without being hurt? You had better thank me, because I
 am the one (10) who did a kindness to you beyond expectation while
 allowing your head to enter my mouth. | Nothing that enters the
 mouth of a hyena comes out again."

PROVERBS.

1. Simba lo ngwena lili mumfula.
 (The strength of the crocodile is in the water.)
2. Meno e imbga alumani.
 (The teeth of the dogs do not bite one another.)
3. Zitiyo kuenda mumphala kuvona ndi mai.
 (Chicks that go into the chicken-house see their mother.)
4. Mgana walilila nyele yo lufuta.
 (The child cried for a reed flute [that means, do not make an
 effort to get what has no value].)

¹ The lines correspond to the Gaza Land version.

5. Vulombo, vulombo havgo desa lo kumga alikokotwi.
(Misery, misery, indeed! A calabash of water which is licked clean! [that means, Even if I am poor, I do not propose to be exploited. If I did, I should be like a calabash that has been licked clean].)
6. Funda mutako ngeine nyama.
(By walking back, game is obtained [that means, it is often worth while to go back in order to get things which you own rather than to seek something new at a distance].)
7. Yafila Malopanyi kunamunyu.
(He died in Malopanyi, where there is salt [that is, the game died where there is salt available for cooking the venison,—success under the most favorable circumstances].)
8. Chipanga achizivi vatendji.
(The knife does not know its owner [that is, it cuts every one, even its owner].)
9. Ngali pole wakapsa ndilo.
(Let it cool off, he has burnt himself.)
10. Wakalasha djindja ngokuda ganga.
(He has denied his tribe on account of gain.)
11. Zambuko lehanga ndi limge chasala sule chachikwali.
(When guinea-hens fly up, a chikwali [a small bird flying slowly] remains behind.)
12. Lembe le hove lakavodjwa nge hove imge.
(A pile of fish can be spoiled by a single fish.)
13. Kuwila mumapiti chemapete.
(Cockroaches fall into the mush [that means, one cockroach after another falls into mush without learning by the fate of the preceding ones].)
14. Kanyi akuna chilima.
(In the home is no darkness [that is, one is always happy at home].)
15. Djila le mphepo ntho kukevelana.
(The bed-cover of the wind [cold] is by [from] pulling apart [that means, if you are under one cover, and each pulls the narrow cover to himself, both will get cold].)
16. Milo aina fembo.
(The nose has the power of smell [that means, man has sense in order to understand what is going on].)
17. Mota aizivi vugalo.
(The boil does not know its place [that is, misfortune comes to both rich and poor].)

18. Kutambisa munyu ngo kulunga djerger.
(He threw away the salt with which frogs are seasoned.)
19. Nshou ailemerhwi ngo mulembe wayo.
(The elephant does not feel the weight of his trunk [that is, the rich do not feel their wealth as a burden].)
20. Kuziluma mgishe che makone.
(To bite one's tail like the makone [a fish] [that is, to act against one's own words].)
21. Ngalava hulu yakafila padima.
(Even a large ship may be wrecked in darkness [that is, small things may spoil great plans].)
22. Vulombo avusekwi.
(Poverty is not laughed at.)
- 23.* (Isisu) kakulilila muhana che hamba.
([We] weeping inside [in the chest] like the tortoise [that is, we weep without being able to offer resistance to an enemy].)
- 24.* Hove djinotevela mulambo wadjo.
(Fish follow their river [that means, people will support their own family or tribe].)
- 25.* Andichalambi kununa pachoto ngo pondali.
(I do not refuse to yield fat when I am on the hearth [fire] [that means, I yield to pressure].)
- 26.* Andinyiswi nge chilo chichina mulomo.
(I am not defeated by a thing that has no mouth [that is, man must persevere, for the future does not speak].)
- 27.* Mulilo wo mbava aukotwi.
(By the fire of a thief not to be warmed [that is, if you associate with bad people, you may be taken as one of them].)
- 28.* Manthede a-novengana pakurga, napamfumfu anobesana.
(Baboons quarrel over food, [but] in danger help one another.)
29. Kūsukuta mbeleko mgana achito abarhwa.
(To tan the carrying-blanket of a child before it is born [that is, borrowing trouble].)

* Revised from Natalie Curtis, *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent* (New York, G. Schirmer), p. 14.

1922 Stannus Wayao.pdf

HARVARD AFRICAN STUDIES

VOLUME III

VARIA AFRICANA III

EDITORS

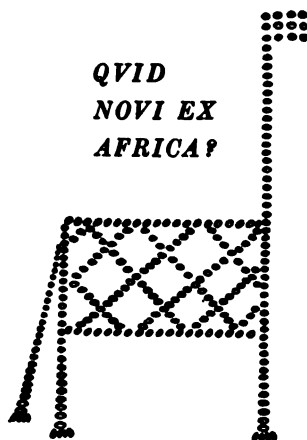
E. A. HOOTON, PH.D., B.LITT.

NATICA I. BATES

ASSISTANT EDITOR

RUTH OTIS SAWTELL

*QVID
NOVI EX
AFRICA?*



**THE AFRICAN DEPARTMENT OF THE
PEABODY MUSEUM OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U.S.A.**

1922

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
V. GIUFFRIDA-RUGGERI The actual state of the question of the most ancient Egyptian populations	3
E. CERULLI The folk-literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia	9
H. S. STANNUS The Wayao of Nyasaland	229
C. PRABODY Note on prehistoric collections from Northwest Africa in the Peabody Museum of Harvard University	373

origin of mankind is explained in a story given elsewhere; *Mulungu* takes no part, nor is the supernatural even invoked in explanation.

The religion of the Yao may then be summed up as ancestor worship plus an ill-defined, uncertain belief in a supreme being. Their religion is not animistic. There are certain spirits of evil, demons, fairies and supernatural beings and animals which, however, do not play any real part in their religious beliefs.

Native Sayings. Natives are very fond of sayings, many of which are of the same nature as our own proverbs. The meaning of many of them is, however, not always self-evident but depends on some little story with a moral.

The following are some of those which I have collected among the Yao near Zomba:

1. *Akamwile likambale!* (or *lipuku!*)

He caught a fish, (a mouse!)

An expression meaning "He slipped down." The variations being used when wet or when dry under foot.

2. *Ulama uli m'meso!*

Cunning is in the eyes (evident).

An expression meaning "Look out; some one is after us!"

Kalulu chenjera!

Rabbit be clever!

This is a Mang'anja equivalent to the above.

3. *Changapikana wachitelechele mwiponda!*

A thing that did not listen they cooked in among the herbs!

An insect which had not listened to advice about the dangers of sitting on herbs used as vegetables, was gathered up by a woman and cooked with them.

An expression used with the sense "If you do not take advice and anything happens to you, it will be your own fault."

4. *Mtela uli m'mapikanilo!*

Medicine is in the ears!

Meaning "You are forewarned; it is your own look out!"

5. *Nangalamuche wamlechele chikalakasa!*

Mr Would-Be-Clever they left with the skull!

Ku-kalamuka, to be clever (to show off); an expression made to a newcomer who unbidden joins in a discussion. It has reference to the following story and means that anyone joining a party unbidden may find himself in an awkward situation. Some strangers came to a village, and after being given food and quarters, all retired for the night. One of them, however, Mr. Would-Be-Clever, hearing something going on outside crept out of the house to find out what was happening. Seeing some people playing at catch-ball, he

joined in the game, unasked. Next moment, the ball came in his direction and catching it in the moonlight, he suddenly found himself grasping a bleached human skull, while everyone else had vanished. There he had to stand frightened as he was till the morning, when he was found in this ridiculous predicament.

6. *Tungawe watisisye majani gasyene!*

Mr. If-We-Were-You let escape the baboons of the owner (himself).

Ningawe, meaning "if I were you" is also used.

This expression signifies "A man cannot serve two masters" or "He who tries to please everybody will please none," as is explained in the following story: Mr. Tungawe and another man had their gardens adjacent to one another but the latter's was next to the forest and the baboons used to come and ravage his crops. He therefore consulted a medicine man who gave him medicine to put all over the garden, which would cause all the baboons who came to the garden to die: "But," said the medicine man, "you must promise to bring me the *Mtalya*!" (the little baboon which acts as sentinel and guide). The man did as he was told with the medicine and in the morning found all the baboons dead in the garden; so picking up the body of the *Mtalya*, he was just going off with it to the medicine man, when Mr. Tungawe in the next garden who had been a witness of the good wrought by the medicine, said, "If I were you I should not take the little *Mtalya*, but the biggest baboon to give to the medicine man," so after hesitating, he picked up the biggest baboon to take instead of the little one. Immediately, it and its fellows came to life again and ran away into the forest!

7. *Mkokoya wa wawile wanache njusi!*

While they delayed, the children singed the serval cat!

This expression has the meaning, "If you do not do a thing at once, you may be too late!" and has reference to another story. Some youths out hunting killed an animal which they did not recognize, so one of them went back to the village where he found the old men all chatting and told them they had killed an animal they did not know. The old men said, "We will come and see it", but they went on chatting until a second message came. Still they said, "Yes, we are just coming," but they did not go; so the boys not knowing any better, instead of removing the skin, which is of value, with the hair on, singed all the hair off which was their custom with some animals, so that eventually, when the old men arrived they found they had lost a valuable skin. Another saying with the same meaning is: *Mkokoya wawechelele wanache pa ugono*, "By delaying she gave birth to a child on the mat."

8. *Angulola lyuwa wasokonechele!*

(He who said), "I look at the sun", he went astray! [Cf. Johnny-head-in-the-air.]

Che nguusya waiche ku musu!

Mr. The-One-Who-Asks arrived at the village!

An expression intimating that a man who is cocksure about doing a thing may come to grief, whereas the man who takes the trouble to get information gains his object.

9. *M'lvesi mwangalengula mwiwa!*

In the moonlight you cannot cut out a thorn!

A free English translation of this saying would be, "There is a proper time for doing everything." It involves the implication that doing a thing at the wrong time may result in evil.

10. *Apakamwa waulesye ambuje wao!*

Mr Mouth hurt master his!

An expression intimating that careless speech may bring a man into trouble: the mouth is looked upon as the slave of the body. The expression has reference to a story which points a moral against smoking hemp. There was once upon a time a big chief who had a headman (Apakamwa) to whom he entrusted all his messages. One day, the chief brewed beer for hoeing and the big drum was beaten to call all the people together, and thus, the chief leading, they all went to the gardens, but the headman who used to smoke hemp lingered behind and in coming later, while crossing an open glade between the village and the gardens, he saw a human skull beside the path. Half intoxicated with the hemp, he kicked it, saying "Who killed you?" The skull answered, "Apakamwa!" The man was frightened and so kicked it again; then going off to the chief, he related what had happened. The chief and all the people returned with the headman to the place where the skull was and the headman, kicking the skull, asked again who had killed him, but no answer came, and so with a second interrogation. Then the chief had the headman bound and said, "What you say cannot be trusted. You waste our time with your untruths," and he had him killed.

11. *Kola lulasi ngasisaga lwembe!*

Having baldness you must not hide the razor!

An expression meaning "If you have no further use for a thing yourself, do not throw it away; it may be useful to others!"

12. *Lelo lelo mlamba wapilile!*

Today today the *mlamba* was blackened!

A saying meaning "he who hurries will not do best!" *Lelo*, today; *lelelelo* here has the meaning "in a hurry." *Mlamba* is the name of a small jet black bird. The story goes that when all the birds were being painted, the *mlamba* bird was very impatient and coming up to the painter, said, "I must be done today; I am in a hurry." The painter said it would take longer but acting on *mlamba's* persistent cries to be done quickly, he just took up a brush and painted him black all over. The following is sometimes added:

Kwembecheya wanda wapatile marwala (or ilemba)!

Being patient the *wanda* bird came by spots (or marks on its head).

13. *Chembugo, walile nganga mbisi!*

Chembugo, they ate guinea-fowl raw!

An expression depending for its meaning on the story given below, used by a husband to his wife or by one woman to another, intimating that the woman has delegated her work to some one else and is not looking after things properly. A man killed a guinea-fowl and gave it to his wife to cook. She, however, gave it to her servant, Chembugo, to cook in the house while she sat doing nothing on the veranda, calling from time to time to know whether it was cooking well, to which always came answer in the affirmative, "eh." When the meal of porridge was ready in the evening, and she went to get the guinea-fowl from the pot in the kitchen, she found that it lay in the pot in cold water as her servant had only put one handful of grass to make the fire under the pot and then left it.

14. *Ku-m'mulika sungula akanagonel*

By holding a torch aloft (to see if the hare was asleep) before it had lain down!

An expression used to a man who by precipitate action without due caution loses that which he seeks to gain as in the following case: If a man seeks a girl in marriage whom he wants to take to live with him far away in his own village, instead of himself settling in her village according to custom, he must not let this be known or he would be refused.

15. *Walosisye mtikol*

(Your wife) she is showing the porridge stick!

An expression used to a man who is homesick.

16. *Mtau wa kulombela!*

(He has or you have) the perseverance of a suitor!

An expression used to anyone who keeps on asking for something and is a nuisance.

17. *Mbepesi kupakalaga ku meso ni ku ndungu kwakwe!*

The flour (ought) to be painted on the forehead and on the back of the head also!

Mbepesi is the offering of millet flour to the departed spirits, or as here, the sacrificial flour used by the chief to smear the front and back of the head of each boy at the end of the initiation ceremonies. The meaning of the expression is that "one should not only look forward to the good things of the future but also remember all the help that has been given one in the past."

18. *Mkaujauja wam'somile mpamba pe takol*

He who comes and goes and comes again they shot him with an arrow in the buttocks!

Of which the sense is "a man may do wrong once but if he continues to do so, he will suffer for it."

19. *Ligulwwe lyawilile ululu!*

The pig was made a scapegoat (on account of) the gleanings!

A pig who was found picking up the remnants of a crop in a field which had been robbed, was thought to be the thief and killed.

20. *Wawilile galausya mbani!*

He was "let in" badly over the fish-sticks!

A man had put a lot of fish on spits to roast round the fire. While he went to get some more firewood, a thief came and took all the fish. A stranger then approached and was examining one of the sticks, saying, "There must have been a very nice fat fish on this stick," when the owner returned and immediately accused the innocent stranger of stealing his fish. A native coming across a corpse will run away, using the above expression; for if he reports the matter, he may be the first to be accused.

21. *Sungula wa welechele (mwanache) mu uwilo!*

The impotent man had born to him a child in a joke!

A native man who is impotent is very much looked down on and he is the laughing stock of the village. He is constantly made fun of by the women. The story goes that such a man when being chaffed, said, "All right, let me have the prettiest girl in the village," and they said, "All right, old *sungula*, you can do her no harm." But it came to pass that she became pregnant and the women were disgraced. The meaning of the expression is: what is done as a joke may become a reality.

22. *Mowa winji ng'omba sya nyama unandi!*

Days many, hairs of an animal few!

There are more days than there are hairs in an animal's coat! If A has done a good turn to B, and B behaves badly to A, A will remonstrate, using the above expression, meaning, "You may want my help again some day, but I shall then refuse and you will suffer."

23. *Chilambo changalinga makono!*

The (country) earth cannot (be) measured in cubits!

Meaning, "You never know when you may want return for your good deeds.

24. *Kusowela kusalasya, kusuka kulijimiya! or kuponya pa moto!*

To be generous (is) to save up, to be stingy (is) to deny oneself! or to throw in the fire!

Kindness returns to the doer.

25. *Uwili ukoto, ujika wangalikunda kunyuma!*

Two-ness (is) good, oneness he cannot rub the back!

Ku-kunda = to rub the back of another person while bathing, a thing a native appreciates very much. An expression often used with the meaning, "There is safety in numbers," (*winji iskoto!*)

26. *Kulagaga ukusiulitawilila!*

Being in a state of poverty, one must not hang (oneself)!

Ku-laga = to be poor, to be in trouble. Do not give up hope.

27. *Kusichilaga kajangalile kwiwogo!*

Having become rich one must jump for joy in the dark corner of the house.

Meaning "Though you are prosperous at the moment, do not make a show; all these things may pass away quickly," or *Kusichila ukasiujangahila pasa!* "One should not rejoice openly."

28. *Walile masuku pa mtwe!*
They have eaten *masuku* fruit on the head!

The intimate of a household who betrays the friendship of the husband by culpable intimacy with his wife is said "to eat *masuku* fruit with the wife over the head of the husband." (Cf. French, *faire cocu*.)

29. *Mpamba wa kuulolela wangakawa kuichila m'meso!*
The arrow he is watching, it does not take long to reach the eye!

A man who looks on and does not take steps to stop an ill at the beginning will suffer heavily in the end.

30. *Mwangamwisye liganga!*
You kept me holding a stone!

You are late in your appointment; you have kept me waiting.

31. *Likule pilikumila mbinji* (or *mbindimbi*) *likulitika!*
The jackal when he swallows *mbinji* fruit is confident; (i.e. a jackal knows he can void the seeds of this fruit).

Likulitika has the sense of when jumping over a stream, the jumper is sure of landing on the opposite bank. The expression used of a man means that he feels pretty sure to get through with what he is doing. (Note: lions in contradistinction to jackals are said to eat *masuku* but always to expel the seeds from the mouth, as the seeds are sharp-pointed and very irritating. I have myself seen a man die from perforation of the bowel by these seeds.)

32. *(Akwete) mpache mpache walichinji!*
(He has) smearing smearing of the bat!

Reference is made here to the habits of the bat which often makes a meal of figs and then flying to other trees, leaves its droppings under them also so that one might take them to be fig trees, too. The saying refers to a man who manages to involve a lot of others in his own trouble.

33. *Mapwisa akulapa sajo!*
The marsh-mongoose they (people) admire (its) footprints!

The *mapwisa* is a small rodent whose footprints may be seen all over the gardens in the morning, but seldom the animal itself. The meaning of the saying is, "If you are going to steal, it does not matter if you leave your footprints, but do not hang about and get caught!"

34. *Ndende chenene wamkoleche matumbo!*
Mr I-Must-Do-Well they on him hanged the entrails!

Well meaning people often get into trouble! This refers to a story of a man who had a great friend in another village who died. Hearing he was dead, he went to the village and found all the relatives mourning the dead man. To show his friendship, he commenced wailing and went into the house and lay down by the corpse among the chief mourners, though not one of them; later, he fell asleep. While asleep, evil spirits (*msawi*) came and cut open the corpse and removing the liver, they took out the entrails and hung them about the sleeping man's neck, and smeared his hands with blood. In the morning, the mourners found the man in this condition and to avenge what they supposed to be his desecration of their dead, they killed him. The interpretation put upon this story and the meaning of the saying is that "however well intentioned you may be, you should not transgress custom."

35. *Nguku ja chilendo uleu chikuni!*
The fowl of strangeness long tail!

A newcomer in the fowl-yard is pecked at by the other fowls and if it had a long tail, this would be noticed. In the same way, "If you are a stranger in a place, anything you do will be remarked; therefore your conduct should be exemplary."

36. *Nkambaka manyi ga Chikolo!*
Do not smear me with the excrement of Chikolo!

This is a woman's saying, meaning, "I don't want to be dragged into your quarrel!" *Chikolo* is an interesting word. It is a girl's name used as Polly is used in English in speaking to any girl child whose name you do not know: "Come here, Polly, and show me the parson's house." For Tommy used in the same way, the Yao says *Manganya*.

37. *Nakoma akupinda anasi!*
The beer basket he deals in a neighbor!

Nakoma is a small flat basket with ornamented rim. The meaning of the phrase is: "one's neighbors are not always disinterested."

38. *Ajiwile mandanda!*
He has stolen eggs!

This is an expression used of anyone who has hiccough. It is said that he is so surprised at being thus accused that the hiccough stops.

39. *Amwali, ichimugwaga apile ndundi ku nyuma!*
You girl, (with) expectation he burnt blistering to the back!

In a native house, the man and woman lie side by side on a mat between the fire and hut wall, the man next the fire, facing it when sleeping. When he wishes to enjoy marital relations, he turns towards the woman and lies on his side with his back to the fire. The saying refers to the uxorious husband whose advances are refused by his wife, but he persists until his back is blistered by the heat of the fire. The saying intimates that it is no good going on wanting a thing refused you; you only suffer for it.

40. *Gonera lwala mtukuta!*

Lying on the rock, heat!

This is a slang expression which in full would read, "It is nice and warm lying on a rock in the sun, but it is not so comfortable as being in bed in company with your wife; you can go on waiting but you won't get anything." This might even be said to a dog, watching as a dog will, every morsel of food lifted to its master's mouth.

41. *Kulupilila mesi ga mbisu!*

To have hopes of water for maggots!

It is a custom before lying down to sleep on the floor mat, to take it up and pour boiling water on the earth floor to kill any blood-sucking maggots (Congo floor-maggot, *Auchmeromyia*). If you see a pot cooking on the fire, you naturally think there is food being prepared but you may be disappointed; it may only be the pot for heating the water to kill the maggots. The saying is thus used to a man who has made an assignation and is disappointed but goes on waiting.

42. *Kuluma upeu!*

To bite cockroach-like!

The cockroach is described by natives as going up to what it will eat, remaining quiet for some moments, and then suddenly taking a bite. This is said of a man who comes up to you smiling and then hits you a hard blow.

Among the Yao as among other tribes that I have previously mentioned,¹ signs of salutation to a superior are made by clapping the hands or patting the breast or buttock with one hand, at the same time crouching down. A woman will go off the path and kneel, looking away from a superior passing along the roadway.

A person going by the door of a hut where others are sitting, will say "*Kumlango kuno!* At the door here." Passing behind anyone, he will say "*Ku-nyu~ma!* At the back!" Meeting anyone on a path, a man will simply say, "*Icho*, here," adding perhaps, "*Ku-chele!* all is well!" A chief or headman on returning to his village after a journey, is greeted by the women with trilling of the tongue (*Ku-luluta*).

Man and wife do not greet each other in the morning. The wife rises first and draws water and places it in the hut for the husband's use but nothing may be said.

When a visitor is entertained and a chicken cooked for a repast, the "pope's nose" is always for the visitor. The right hand only is used in dipping into the common pot. A man of small importance, though replete, will go on making pretence of eating at a common meal by taking very small amounts so that his superior shall finish first, and rise and go away before him.

I may here add the words used by the Yao for the sounds made by various animals; they are interesting to compare with those of other languages:

¹ 'Notes on some tribes of British Central Africa,' op. cit., p. 291-292.

1922 Stirke Barotse.pdf

BAROTSELAND :

Eight Years among the Barotse

BY

D. W. STIRKE

Late Native Commissioner Northern Rhodesia.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER BY
SIR HARRY JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

At one time H.M. Commissioner, &c., for Northern Zambezia.

CHAPTER VI.

Barozi Riddles and Conundrums.

CONUNDRUMS are universal throughout the Barozi, and a few are given as examples. Most of them are lacking in humour from an European point of view, but the ability to guess them is looked on as quite an asset, especially among women and children. Each riddle is prefixed by the words "A-ko," "Here it is," used by the person asking the riddle. The person taking up the challenge replies "Keyi," which means "Bring it." These words are pure Silui (Serozi) and are used for all riddles, although the riddles themselves may be in Sikololo, Mbunda or any other tongue or dialect in use in any part of Barozi. There are not any permanent riddles, as they are generally made up by the person asking them, but there are a few certainly which, from the length of time they have been known and their popularity, may be considered as permanent jokes.

(1) *Question.* "Ku tanta mbilingwa ku uka ni mbilingwa."

"It climbs up and falls back."

Answer. "Ki kokwani ha ipahama kwa kota."

"An insect climbing a tree (still slips)."

Barozi Customs (Mikwa)

- (2) Q. "Kateli ka shangwe no malimba."
"My father's calabash has spots."
A. "Ki ngwesi."
"A tiger-fish."
- (3) Q. "Ka ka bonwe fo ka felela."
"Something one cannot see the end of."
A. "Ki ndila."
"It is a road."
- (4) Q. "Mbumu na mbumu ka kuwana."
"Chief and chief do not visit each other."
A. "Ki musitu."
"It is the forest."
- (5) Q. "Tutanela twili ba mundi."
"Two huts in a village."
A. "Mele no akatana."
"The breasts of a young girl."
- (6) Q. "Ka nwela ka tumuka."
"Something that dives in and leaps out."
A. "Ki silabo."
"A paddle."
- (7) Q. "A lila ba likamba la walanda."
"Something that crys on the river bank."
A. "Ki maoma."
"It is the war drum."
- (8) Q. "Ha ka siwi."
"Something that cannot be left behind."
A. " "
"A shadow."
- (9) Q. "Ka be ka luma, ka be lu felile."
"If this thing bit, we should die."

Barotseland: Eight Years among the Barotse

- A. "Ki munyako."
"The doorway."
- (10) Q. "Kato ka shangwi ku longa."
"My father's boat is full."
- A. "Likundi."
"A pod of peas."
- (11) Q. "Ka kasa fezwi bu meti."
"Something of which the blood is never finished."
- A. "Ki pula."
"The rain."
- (12) Q. "I samba ka shemwa ak'a endi ni balelo."
"Born a long time, and yet cannot walk."
- A. "Sitondo."
"A tree."
- (13) Q. "Anuke a ku fukile utu kobela no ku kena."
"Boys dressed in white clothes."
- A. "Ki mundali."
"Mealies."
- (14) Q. "Lila la tau ha li iniwi ki nzi."
"A fly cannot sit on the stomach of this lion."
- A. "Ki mulilo."
"It is fire."
- (15) Q. "Ka bata mazwalelo."
"It looks for a place to be born in."
- A. "Ki tozi."
"Pumpkin stalks (before they bear fruit.)"
- (16) Q. "Mutala no ku sumenena."
"A well fixed fence."

Barozi Customs (Mikwa)

- A. "Ki mayo."
"The teeth."
- (17) Q. "Ndundu no makumba."
"A bundle of bark."
- A. "Ki lezazi."
"The sun."
- (18) Q. "Namani ya zwalwa ka nako ye, kwamora-
raho a mazazi e na le manaka ama-
teleli."
"A calf born now, in a few days has
long horns."
- A. "Ki mbututu."
"A baby."
- (19) Q. "Lutondo lwa ka yengwa Nyambi."
"Tree made by the god Nyambi."
- A. "Ki kuma."
"The papyrus reed (with tuft on top)."
- (20) Q. "Mulamu wa Nyambi na mbulwa ma-
kolwa."
"The stick of the god Nyambi has no
branch."
- A. "Ki noha."
"A snake."
- (21) Q. "Mulume a lebe a mane kapata matunga
a bile."
"A long man cannot reach this country."
- A. "Ki lihulimu."
"The sky."
- (22) Q. "Komo i potoloha silezi."
"A cow that walks round in the mud."

Barotseland: Eight Years among the Barotse

- A. "Mukwenyani."
"A mother-in-law."
- (23) Q. "A mutulo u ku nengela a mbowela u ku nengela."
"The people of the north dance and those of the south dance."
- A. "Matali a kota."
"The leaves of trees."
- (24) Q. "Ku tina ku mukelekete, mukelekete ku choka."
"You climb this tree, it breaks."
- A. "Ki mutwa."
"The little thorn-bush."
- (25) Q. "Ka ka muenwa mwanda."
"You cannot see any trace of it."
- A. "Ki mundu."
"It is the watersnail."
- (26) Q. "Ndo nambulwa mwelo."
"The house that has no door."
- A. "Liki."
"An egg."
- (27) Q. "Ka lubilo ku siya sitimela."
"What runs quicker than a train?"
- A. "Ki pilu."
"The heart."
- (28) Q. "Mwandu ya ngulubati ha ku keni lish-ingwa zepeli."
"No two logs can enter this old man's house."
- A. "Lisuba la ndonga."
"The eye of a needle."

1924 Dundas Chagga.pdf

KILIMANJARO

AND ITS PEOPLE

A History of the Wachagga,
Their Laws, Customs and Legends, together with
Some Account of the Highest Mountain
in Africa

by

CHARLES DUNDAS

CHAPTER XI

CHAGGA PROVERBS

THE Chagga people make much use of sayings, and they constitute no small part in the education of children. While some are enigmatical, mostly they are obvious to the native, though Europeans may not catch their meaning without some explanation.

The following few examples show that the African is not without his worldly wisdom, which he has been able to express in pithy words :

1. *Morika mrema nyi ekeghambo nyi mtsu.* "He who cultivates in secret is betrayed by the smoke."

A selfish man may cultivate where he is not seen in order to mislead people as to his food supply and so to evade demands on his generosity, but eventually he has to burn the stubble and the smoke will acquaint neighbours with what he is doing. Selfish deeds cannot remain secret.

2. *Samanya yekesonguo pfo ni manawo o mka.*
"Fortune is like unto the younger sister."

A man marries a girl whom he esteems, but afterwards he may find that while she is lazy, thievish or faithless, her younger sister is virtuous, and he says :
"If I had known this, I would have taken her sister

342 KILIMANJARO AND ITS PEOPLE

to wife." But the younger sister stays in the shadow until the elder is married. So good fortune is never to the fore, but regrets are futile, and we must abide by the common law of nature.

3. *Sarigha ngipfu nyi yekerawana na moo.* "The dead gazelle teaches the live gazelle."

The wounded gazelle escapes the hunter to die in the forest. Those of its kind which see the carcass avoid the hunter with greater care. So the penalties an evildoer brings on himself warn other men from following his example.

4. *Kowona oroo arure mana na mrewa mbie ruo necha.* "If you see your fellow tethering his child, say to him, 'Tether well.'"

To tether a child is equivalent to handling him like a beast, but even such misdeeds should be met with good words. Do not mock or ignore wrongdoing, but improve it as you may.

5. *Korambulyia makura ghawi othiwara manya lyimwi-fo.* "If you hunt two partridges you will catch neither."

The moral is obvious.

6. *Manya ulalya kuwi cha ishu lya mbegha kuwi.* "Do not feast on both sides like the knife."

The Chagga knife for meat cutting is double edged. It is evil to make friends with your friends' enemies, for you will not do it without slandering the one to the other.

7. *Manya ulanyc upangenyi cha ipfuve.* "Do not foul the cave where you have slept."

It is said of the baboons that they foul their sleeping places until they can no longer use them, and are compelled to migrate. A man who does evil in one place must fly to another, or if you wrong one who received you well, he will reject you when you again need his aid.

8. *Manya ulamine upanga ulemuowa.* "Do not neglect the cave (or trench) that sheltered you."

In war men sought refuge in caves and trenches, but in peace time neglected these shelters with the result that they were often found to be choked or otherwise useless. In time of prosperity remember those who stood by you in distress.

9. *Wori wo punga nyi unanga.* "The ox rewards with kicks."

The cow in the hut gives rich return of milk, but the woman who tends and feeds an ox in her hut is rewarded with kicks. The saying is used for reproach to an undutiful child who responds to parental care with stubbornness and disrespect, while a good child brings nothing but blessing to the home.

10. *Ikorwi lyekemina kilahu pfo.* "A snail cannot destroy the grove."

In the hot season snails seek the shade of the banana groves, which can afford them shelter without harm to itself. A man should aid others in distress without fear of harming himself.

11. *Paara lya mreshè iwe nyi lyekapfia iho makirighawe.* "The jackal that digs two holes dies between them."

The jackal is secure in his hole, but some, thinking to have double security, make two holes and fly from one to the other when pursued, with the result that they are killed in the open. Similarly a man who thinks to avoid the vicissitudes of his country or village by living in two localities, exposes himself doubly. Do not pursue two ends, you will fall between two stools.

12. *Manya ulaghamba ngikapo pfuma na umbe ya mndu.* "Say not: 'I will have me a speer made with the ox of another.'"

The price of a speer is an ox. To boast of what you will acquire with means which are not yours is foolish. Be content to aspire to no more than is within your own ability.

13. *Molawa ko mangi, na mofurumia ko mangi, nechikuruo kite.* "Those who come early and those who go late to the Chief find a dead dog."

It is better to stay at home and mind your own business than to idle around the Chief's residence, where you are like to be involved in strife, and where many are killed.

14. *Nyi punga yekeghamba ngampfa ochia lo chonyi.* "The bull that is slaughtered sighs: 'I die, woe my skin.'"

The slaughtered ox sustains a single thrust, but his skin, which survives long after, is spiked in every part to stretch it, and suffers by consequence innumerable hurts. So when a great man dies—it may be a Chief—his dependents suffer, and their many sufferings exceed his. The wounds of one are the wounds of many.

15. *Kyapfo nyikyo sandu kyechnikulya.* "Your wealth is your destruction."

Riches create envy; if you have little to covet you have few enemies.

16. *Mangi kakuwika ambo, rika nguwoyoni.* "If the Chief gives you a ring, hide it in your clothing."

Formerly, the Chiefs were wont to honour men who had performed signal services by publicly placing a ring or bracelet on their hand or wrist. Such men were henceforth greatly privileged and respected. Their influence was so great that all sought their favour or protection, but this led to so many evildoers soliciting their patronage and aid from just punishment, that they themselves came to be hated of those who had been wronged by their protégés, and thus in the end distinction was apt to bring them to ruin and dishonour. Do not let men see that you are distinguished.

17. *Punga nyi imwi urukenyi ikanyasa waka maruwa.*
"But one bull in the land gave milk for all the women."

In war-time so long as a single bull was left it would serve all the cows remaining, and these, after calving, gave milk for all. The Chief is meant; he is but one, yet he provides for all.

Another saying, almost identical in meaning, runs: "If the cattle are finished, yet have we a Chief." So long as the country was not without a ruler, its fortunes could be restored.

18. *Upuru lo mangi lukomekusokia na lo ngora nalochisoka.* "When the Chief's cesspit sinks, the Chief's subjects are immersed."

The cesspit is the hollow outside the hut which drains the cattle-stall. When it sinks it is because the Chief is poor in cattle, because, perhaps, he has been plundered by enemies. It is certain then that his subjects will have to make good his losses, and they are consequently impoverished.

This saying was employed as a warning to Chiefs against making enemies and embarking in hostilities.

19. *Lyakaria kunu nyi mndu ura mana.* "He who leaves a child lives eternally."

Man lives on through his descendants. The adage may be spoken as a form of congratulation or blessing. Another blessing, more particularly invoked by parents on their children, says: "The blessing of offspring to herd and to tether be with you." Herding is done by boys, while tethering or tending of stock in the hut is the special duty of daughters, so that the blessing of both male and female offspring is meant. Furthermore, the herder guards, the tetherer secures, and the inner meaning of the saying is thus extended to invoke the blessings of protection and security.

1926 Brown Bantu.pdf

AMONG THE BANTU NOMADS

A RECORD OF FORTY YEARS SPENT AMONG THE BECHUANA
A NUMEROUS & FAMOUS BRANCH OF THE CENTRAL
SOUTH AFRICAN BANTU, WITH THE FIRST
FULL DESCRIPTION OF THEIR ANCIENT
CUSTOMS, MANNERS & BELIEFS

BY
J. TOM BROWN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN, M.A.

Professor of Social Anthropology
South Africa University, Cape Town

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS & A MAP

London
Seeley, Service & Co. Ltd.
196 Shaftesbury Avenue
1926

CHAPTER XIX

Proverbs

THE language of the Bechuana people is very rich in proverbs and wise sayings. No conversation of any great length takes place without one or more saws being brought into it, and the way in which the native scholar, unable to read or write, can make an apt point by the introduction of only part of a proverb reveals to us that his mind is not that of the mere illiterate, but one trained by much use to the application of suitable references to the most intricate affairs.

The writer here offers a few of the many hundred of these proverbs, with a literal translation. Several will be found to be almost a literal equivalent of European proverbs, while others bear a wonderful similarity to them, the only difference being in the circumstances of the two races. Take, for instance, that wherein we have the moon calling the sun white ; naturally there would be no point in two black things upbraiding each other because of their colour. To us it is the kettle that reviles the pan for its blackness, but to the Bechuana it is the whiteness that calls for contempt.

If the reader is interested in proverbs he will find a very abundant supply in the collection made by Mr. Solomon T. Plaatje.

Proverbs.

A ñwedi oa tla a tshege letsatsi, a re, U moshweu?
Does the moon laugh at the sun, saying "You are white?"

A u ruta chwehe mapalamò? Are you teaching the baboon to climb?

A u shugèla ñwana thari mpeñ? Are you making a carrying skin for the unborn child?

Ba èpèla selèpè. They are burying the hatchet.

Ba keledi tsa mathe. They whose tears are made of spittle (crocodile tears).

Bana ba bua le Modimo. Children talk with God.

Banna ga ba na thwadi, ba bonywe ke Mma-mariga.
There is no difference in men, they have been found out by Mrs. Winter.

Boherehere ga se papadi. Cunning isn't business.

Boyañ ga bo ke bo boba boyañ yo boñwe. Grass doesn't bind other grass.

Boilhale ga bo na ntlo ea yòna. Wisdom has no dwelling of her own.

Choshwane e romile tlou. An ant once sent an elephant on an errand.

Chukudu e e senañ ñwana e ikisa kgobeñ. The rhinoceros which has no calf takes itself to the muddy pool.

Chukudu ga e ke e cwa sekgweñ hèla, ea bo e utlwile

botlhoko. The rhinoceros does not leave the wood unless it has been hurt.

Goga, u le gatetse. Arise, you have trodden it. (Cheer up, you have passed the crisis.)

Di sela mmapa ga di ratane. They who gather side by side do not love each other.

Di tsa bana ba mpa ga di tsenwe. Affairs of the family are not to be entered into (by strangers).

Ditsèbè di ea molato di sa o lalediwe. Ears that have not been invited witness a matter.

Ea re letsatsi le gu tlhabetse u le aramèlè, u gopola le tsèna leruñ. When the sun shines bask in it, remembering that it may go behind the cloud.

E e mashi ga e itsale. A good milch cow doesn't necessarily give birth to a good milker.

E e senañ mènd ea lomèlwa. The one without teeth must get others to bite for it.

E tla re ke re ke dipitse ke bone mebala ea còna. I shall believe they are zebras when I see their stripes.

E tlhale e amusa e eme, e tshilo e amusa e letse. The wise dam suckles its young while standing up, the foolish one suckles hers lying down.

Ga se go oo lobelò, go marapò a a thata. Not to the swift, but to the enduring (is the race).

Goa shwa motho go sale motho. When a man dies, a man remains.

Go ba ua bo u ipeèla. To give (food) is to put by for yourself.

Go lepa goa diia. To gaze long hinders (Procrastination is the thief of time).

Go mo tla moshogotlhd. To come dangerously near.

Goo ra motho go thèbè phachwa. A man's home is a black and white (good) shield.

Go segò eo o tsetseñ ñwana oa mosetsana ; oa mosimane morwa mogwagadiagwe. Happy is she who has borne a daughter, a boy is the son of his mother-in-law.

Hibiñ go chwaragañwa ka dikobd. In the dark people hold on to one another's cloaks.

Itaea tshipi e sale khwibidu. Strike the iron while it is still red.

Ke ba gare ga naka tsa nare. I am between the horns of the buffalo.

Khudu ea mariga e itsiwe ke mmei. Where the winter tortoise is is known only to him who placed it there.

Khudu e dule logapeñ. The tortoise is out of the shell.

Lala ka lobadi. Sleep over your wound.

Leshwetsana ga le lele hëla lea bo le utlwa mashwedi a magolo. The young bird doesn't crow until it hears the old ones.

Lomað lo lo nilha pedi lo tlhaba kobd le moroki. A two-pointed awl pierces both the kaross and the sewer.

Lencwe ya ma bane ga le tlhabe kgomo. The evening word does not kill the ox.

Lehuha le apeecwe le lencwe, ga bucwa lencwe, lehuha ya sala. Polygamy (jealousy) was boiled with a stone, the stone got soft but polygamy remained.

Letlatla le motlha moñwe hëla. Boisterous mirth has only one time, i.e. is ephemeral.

Lencwe le peduñ ga le tshitse. The word within the heart does not satisfy.

Maand ga a site go sita a losho. Plans do not always overcome, but that of death does.

Maboko ga a lale nageñ. News does not spend a night on the way.

Magodu ga a cwaane. Thieves do not fall out.

Mma ñwana ke eo, o chwara thipa. This is the mother, she lays hold of the knife (by the blade).

Maru ga se pula ; musì ke òna molelò. Clouds are not rain ; smoke means fire.

Moëñ ñaka, o sidila mmobodi. The visitor (stranger), like a doctor, heals the sick.

Moenyana-pele bòne loa oabò. A harbinger is the lamp of his friends.

Mogami o anya morokoco. The milker drinks the milk of the second milking.

Moipolai ga a lelekwe. The suicide is not mourned.

Moroka o sita ka leru. The rain-maker convinces by the cloud.

Motho ea re a re podi dia sisa a bo a raea tsabò. When a man speaks of goats with much milk, he is usually speaking of his own.

Motse o lwapeñ. The home is in the courtyard (women's quarters).

Ñwana-mma o anya nyetsana. The aunt's child sucks the childless mother.

Ñwana oa ntlha molekana oa ga rragwe. The first child is the companion of its father.

Ñwana o sa utlweñ molaò oa ga rragwe o ila utlwa

oa manoñ. The child that listens not to his father's commands will obey the law of the eagles.

Nòga e itomile mogatla. The snake has bitten its own tail.

Ntlha ea kgosi e iwa ke Modimo. God is (generally) on the side of the chief.

O dule ka choba ya mogodu. He has got out by the hole in the paunch.

O isetse bèla yaka peba. He has begotten himself just as a mouse does. (Like father, like son.)

O loleme. She has a long tongue.

O matlhò mantisi. He has many eyes (i.e. is attracted by everything in turn).

O upa maraka tau e setse e tlhasetse. He charms his cattle post after the lion has attacked.

Pala gabedi e sitile pala gañwe bela. Count twice has overcome count once.

Phala e ruta diphilana matlolo. The antelope teaches its young to leap.

Phoko-kgolo ga e cwe ka ñwana motho. Scandal doesn't come through the well-born child.

Pdò ga di ke di tlhakanèla lesaka. Two bulls do not share the same cattle kraal.

Re dulwe ke Modimo. We are forsaken of God.

Sedibana se pele ga se ikañwe. The water pool ahead is not to be depended on.

Se ileñ sea bo se ile, lesilo ke mo se-latedi. What has gone has gone, he is a fool who goes after it.

Setsetse se bolawa ke namane. The mother is killed

by the calf (i.e. the mother comes to her death by returning to the calf newly born).

Se tshege eo o oleñ mareledi a sale pele. Don't laugh at the fallen, there are still slippery places on ahead.

Tau ga di adimane mènò. Lions don't lend each other their teeth.

Tau ga e ke e tsala leñau. A lion never breeds a leopard.

Tbukhu o rile ke lobelò, marota a re ke namile. The little wolf said I am swift-footed, but the undulating country said I am wide.

Tsela mocopodia ga e latse nageñ. The roundabout way does not compel one to spend the night in the open.

U bonya u tla loñwa ke nòga maoto ao mabedi. You are so slow that a snake could bite you on both feet.

U tla bo u kgotlile semane. You will have stirred up a wasp's nest.